

A MUSTARD-SEED  
IN JAPAN

WM. MERRILL VORIES.

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## THE MUSTARD-SEED.

ONE planted a Seed—'twas a little thing  
To sow in the field of his Lord and King ;—  
A grain of mustard. It grew and spread  
Till it sheltered the weary toiler's head.  
Among its branches sweet songsters rare  
Sang hymns of praise, as they nested there.  
And he who had planted the tiny seed  
Forgot his shame at the humble deed.

And one gave his Life—'twas a little thing,  
But 'twas all he had to give his King.  
The Master sent him where Darkness dwelt,  
Where the Blind and Lame to strange idols knelt.  
'Twas a lonely land ; but he looked Above  
As he brot to the hopeless the message of Love.  
And many whose gropings had been in vain  
To the life of the Spirit were born again.  
And his life poured out for a world in need  
Was multiplied like the Mustard-Seed !

—W. M. V.



A MUSTARD-SEED IN JAPAN



# A MUSTARD-SEED IN JAPAN

BY

WM. MERRELL VORIES.

(ILLUSTRATED)

FOURTH EDITION

REVISED THRUOUT  
PARTS II AND III ENTIRELY NEW

1922

OMI MISSION, OMI-HACHIMAN, JAPAN.

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## PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

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IN 1911, at the suggestion of many American friends, the story of the founding of Omi Mission was first published, practically as it appears in part one of the present volume. The first edition was exhausted rapidly, inspite of the fact that, being privately printed, there was no advertising or distributing agency. A second edition, revised and enlarged with data on the subsequent two years' growth, appeared early in 1913, and a third edition followed later in the same year.

Since these editions, there have been repeated calls for more copies of the book, and for a new edition to embody the unexpectedly large growth of Omi Mission that has occurred in the past few years. But during the late war the high cost of

publication and the exactions of the expanding work combined to prevent the undertaking of the task. During the summer of 1920, an ocean voyage provided the opportunity for writing the present parts two and three. It was not until the end of 1921, however, that we could find time to revise the entire volume and get it into the printers' hands. Even down to the third proofreading, new developments occurred that demanded slight additions; so that the present volume, altho issued as the fourth edition of the original story, is practically a new book.

To offer an apology for inflicting another book upon our over-booked world would be an affectation, after the very cordial reception of our previous editions and the many requests for this one. We may be permitted, however, to anticipate the criticisms of reviewers by pointing out the fact that no attempt has been made to

produce a literary work. Whatever value this little book may contain comes from the truth of the story it tries to tell—not from the manner of telling.

None of our readers can marvel more at the course events have taken than the writer who has experienced them. It is these experiences that have given him the foundation of his faith that God the Creator is also God the Father—Who loves us, and God the Planner—Who has a purpose for each human life, and will make His Plan prevail in and thru every life that is surrendered to His control.

If this little volume has any one objective greater than another, it is the desire to testify to this faith and to persuade others to try it.

The writer freely confesses to great enthusiasm over the work in Omi. This has doubtless led him to describe the situation, both past and present, in rather roseate hues.

A visitor to Omi Mission might search with microscope and fine-toothed comb for some of the conditions which to him seem very real, and fail to find them as anticipated. For example, we have implied in part II that the work has already become "a tree;" whereas from many points of view, even to ourselves, it is still in the "seed" stage. If called to account for this exaggeration, we can only reply that there are certain elements in the development of this undertaking that have gotten so far out of the ground as to belong to the tree state; and we may add that we have not presumed to claim that our tree has yet come to *fruage*. The sprout has peeped thru the surface; the stem has pushed up and branched a bit; birds alight upon the twigs; but we shall have to wait for some future edition to attempt to tell of how the tree flowered forth in springtime beauty—after the crudities and the blemishes had been pruned away—and

then began to bring forth fruit. We trust that that time may come, and toward that end we are laboring—far from content with what has been.

—W. M. V.

Omi-Hachiman, Japan.  
February 2, 1922,  
(17th anniversary of  
reaching Hachiman).

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Special thanks are due to Mrs. Larsen for proof-reading, and to Mr. Lorbeer for preparing the index.



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PART I.

"A MUSTARD SEED"



## PART I.

### A MUSTARD-SEED IN JAPAN

ABOUT eighteen years ago, a student in a provincial academy in the interior of Japan became so much impressed by the character of an American teacher, that he decided himself to adopt the Christianity which he perceived to be the source of his instructor's ideals. Soon after, that teacher was called to another school, and the young man found himself without a guide in his new aspirations ; for neither among the native faculty nor in the student body was there any other of his faith. Nevertheless he persisted in it, and in the solitude of his own room at the school dormitory, he was praying daily that God would send another Christian teacher to his school ; that he might learn more fully, and that his fellow-students might also have the Light that seemed to him to

give so much promise. But his prayers seemed to remain unanswered, and after a time he was graduated from the school. However, because he had proved exceptionally good in the English language, he was retained in the school as an instructor in the preparatory department, and still he continued to pray that the right man might be led to that place.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the opposite side of the earth, events were shaping toward a fulfilment. I had been graduated from college only half a year when a letter reached me from one of the International Secretaries of the Y.M.C.A., asking if I would accept a position as a teacher of English in Japan.

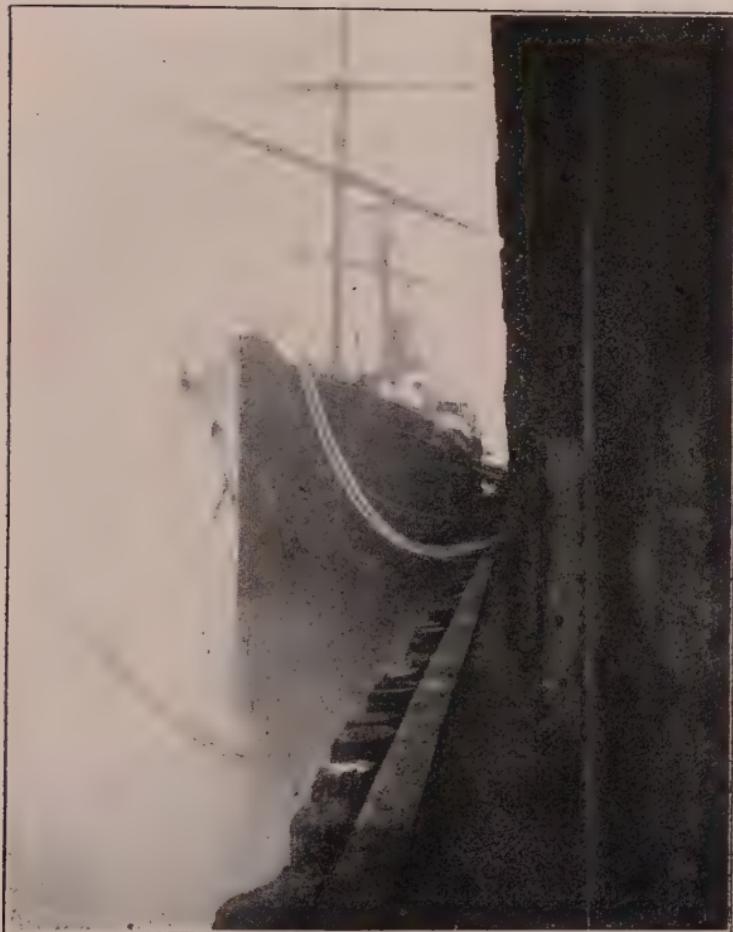
The writer knew that I was a Student Volunteer for Foreign Missions, and that I had expressed certain ideas as to the type of work I should prefer. Among these, I wished to be sent to some neglected portion of the field to begin a pioneer mission, and I

wished, if possible, in some way to earn my own living, rather than to be paid a salary for my services. The tent-making of St. Paul in his missionary work had impressed me.

So the letter informed me that an opening, had come, which might prove exactly such as I had suggested. Here was a Japanese government academy in an interior town, at the heart of a whole province where no missionary had yet resided; and the provincial authorities wanted a teacher of English so much that they would concede him permission to teach Bible classes in his leisure time, so long as he refrained from mentioning religion in the class rooms. Thus I might earn my living by teaching, and at the same time inaugurate mission work in virgin soil. The opportunity impressed me as being so peculiarly what I had been praying for, that within a few hours after receiving the letter I had accepted.

Such were the preliminary conditions that led to my setting sail, in January of 1905, for the Land of the Rising Sun. But it was some months before I came to realize that the prayers of that young Japanese instructor and my own had been answered simultaneously.

On arriving in Tokyo, I went to the national head-quarters of the Y.M.C.A. to receive further directions. What I heard there regarding my future field of labor speedily convinced me that I had certainly been led to a most needy and neglected portion of the unevangelized world. In brief, I was told this: "The province of Omi, to which you are going, is an inland division of the country, cut off from the surrounding parts by a girdle of mountains, isolated from foreign contact, conservative to a degree, has never been occupied by a foreign missionary, and is not only virgin soil, but in the belt of the last stronghold of the once all-powerful Buddhism. The



The S.S. "China," at San Francisco wharf,  
January 10, 1905,—just before Merrell Vories sailed  
for Japan



common people you will find priest-ridden almost beyond approach; the students and teachers of your school, on the other hand, being educated out of the superstitious forms of Buddhism,—which are all they have known,—will be either indifferently agnostic or openly opposed to all religion. You will find nothing prepared for you; but everything against you. You will have three-quarters of a million people all to yourself. Do not be discouraged if, inside of two years, you can see no results in the missionary part of your work."

If I was somewhat disheartened at this, imagine how much more so when, after a long lonely journey on the slow, narrow-gauge train, I found myself set down upon a forsaken-looking station-platform, in the midst of a wide plain, and realized that there was not another man of my race within a radius of thirty miles, nor one with whom I could even converse intelligently—since I had not yet learned a word of Japanese.

Even the elements had conspired to emphasize my loneliness. A piercing north-east wind swept the plain, it was already darkening, tho' only about four o'clock on a February afternoon. I looked about and realized the tremendous odds,—feit that I literally faced 80,000 hostile beings, without even a medium of communicating with them,—and experienced a feeling of such unspeakable solitariness, inadequacy, homesickness, —call the complex sensation what you will,—that the one clear conviction issuing from my consciousness shaped itself into an almost uncontrollable impulse to run,—and to run in the general direction of home:—It was a panicky, nightmare feeling of defeat.

Fortunately, I had spent my last dollar, and had even borrowed money, to take me there; and there was no means of escape.

Looking back after these seventeen years, it is easy to see what the trouble was, that melancholy first week. My great quandary was: What could I do against such con-

Omi-Hachiman Station.





ditions; how was *I* going to win out in Omi. I had not yet learned the true question,—What was God going to do for Omi?

One of the chief developments of this story will be the growing realization that He knew, and had it planned long before I came upon the stage of action. And he will read this narrative to little purpose who does not find in it the lesson that God can take the most unpromising of tools and temper it with fire and water and heavy blows, till it may be used in planting the seeds of His Kingdom where He wills.

Since, then, I had to stay, where should the attack be begun, if not among the young men whom I was teaching? And first I must win their friendship and confidence, before they could be expected to listen to my advice. To that end, I invited the students to make the little old Japanese house which I was occupying their *rendezvous* during their leisure hours, and promised to try to entertain them when they should come.

This invitation did not go begging. In the first place, it was no small attraction that a real live American could be inspected at close range, and in his native surroundings—so to speak,—for he had with him American furnishings and trinkets and a large and varied collection of views and picture post cards that gave intimate glimpses of that Promised Land of Japanese youth—America. Who wouldn't come, and tell his friends, too? And finally, when the curiosity waned, there were those delectable foreign games—new and glamorous there (altho almost prehistoric at home)—such as *Dominoes*, *Linch*, *Ping Pong*, and the like.

There were few quiet evenings in those days, and few students who escaped the *Linch fever* and other epidemics of American origin.

It was not driving me distracted, either. On the contrary, I never had appreciated noise, and people, and talk (even broken,

half-intelligible talk), and all that goes to make up social intercourse, so much as in those weeks following the first tense silence, the solitude, the utter forlornness, of my lonely arrival. My welcome to my visitors was not pretended; and the boys seemed to feel that it was genuine, and responded accordingly.

But entertainment alone, of the students or of myself, was not the purpose of these social evenings. I was studying my field. I was on the lookout for an opening for the work that formed my main purpose.

As soon as I had picked the *leaders* from among the groups that frequented my house, I addressed myself to them in particular; believing that the rank and file would naturally follow them. And to each such student I put a strange and enigmatical question: “Will you join a *Bible class* if I organize one for students?”

Blank looks, at first, were my response,—for most of them knew little or nothing of

what the question might imply. Then some thought, "If it is another kind of American game, I'll certainly be there" !!

I tried to make clearer what I meant, and ended by explaining that it was something that had proved interesting to me, as a student, and that I believed they, too, would find it so. At any rate, would they come once, and try it? And so, because they had not been ill treated at my house before, or because they wished to ingratiate themselves with the American teacher, or because they felt curious to see what it would be like,—several agreed to come.

An evening was set for the first session to meet in my study. And then I was face to face with the first crisis. Suppose I could *not* make it interesting? And *how* could I make a new conception of life itself even *intelligible*, when I could not explain it in their language? Again I felt the inadequacy of my preparation for the task before me, and again came the sense of defeat which



Arrival of Mr. Vories's trunk, February 1905.



had assailed me that first hour on the station platform.

But this time I was to receive my first lesson in looking toward the right Source for a way-out. Now it was that I came to learn how God had prepared that young Japanese Christian for the hour of need. It was because of his ability in *English* that he had been retained in the school. He was not only able, but eagerly willing to fill the gap. Was it not for such an occasion that he had been so long praying in solitude? Here he came forward to be my speech for me; to take my English paragraphs, as I explained the lesson verse by verse, and interpret them skilfully, *and in the true spirit of the original*, which is the crux in all translation.

And the students came. When the chairs and cushions were all filled and still they came, we carried out the furniture, took out sliding partitions, and all sat on the floor of the enlarged room. There were forty-

five at that first session. It seemed better to divide the class, according to ages, into two parts, which would be more easily housed; and this was done. But before many weeks had passed each of the divisions was larger than the original class; there being one hundred and twelve enrolled in the two classes. And then there came from two other academies, some miles distant in our province, where I taught English once a week, voluntary requests from the students themselves, that they also might have Bible classes. And when these had brought the number of such classes up to four, the total enrollment was three hundred and twenty-two.

This was not so bad a showing for that unpromising, uncultivated, neglected field, where we had been warned to expect no results under two years!

Very soon these young men began to perceive that here was no new kind of American game, but something vital; something that appealed to a deep chord in their



The first Bible class group, 1905  
(in the grounds of the Academy).



beings, and promised better things than they had yet dared dream of. It was indeed pathetic to see the soul-hunger of many who had had nothing before to arouse their dormant spiritual natures. They were not deliberately depraved fellows. They had simply never before had an appeal made to the best in them. Now there began to be put to me that question of the hearers of John the Baptist,—“What, then, must we do to be saved?” And, it was an unspeakable joy to be able to point the inquirers, as he did, to the Lamb of God.

I had read in the books of learned “globe-trotters” that the Japanese were a stoical race, never displaying their feelings in public. Imagine my surprise, then, at witnessing a whole roomful of young men, at the very age when one is least willing to show emotion, so deeply moved by these simple incidents and parables from the life of the Christ, that tears and even audible sobs were not infrequent. I shall never forget the first

time one of the boys sought a personal interview with me. Timidly he overtook me, as I was returning from school, and said, in an embarrassed tone without the proverbial preliminary evasions, "Please sir, *Sensei*, will you teach me how to pray?" I took him home, found for him, in the Japanese Bible, where Jesus taught His disciples to pray the world-wide prayer, and tried to make clear the meaning of it all. So I began to perceive that we were not to have to wait two years for results.

It also early became clear that something more was needed in our teaching of the Christian life than mere *talking* about it once a week to groups of students. I was from the first making a study of local conditions, because I found the most telling points in our lessons were the ones that were illustrated by application to the lives and habits of the students themselves.

For example, quite a furor was created at one session when I casually referred to the

exact location of a secret *rendezvous* of one group of students who supposed their place of debauchery was entirely unknown. Exact knowledge about the personal habits of those present made the sessions in which purity was discussed so telling that not a few dated their awakening from those occasions.

I came to realize that abstract talk about the Christian life was largely uncomprehended thru lack of concrete examples. I could not point to a single member of the *faculty* as an illustration fit for emulation. I could not find a *priest* in the town—altho there were some sixteen temples and shrines of Buddhism and Shintoism in our midst—who was a fit example for young men. And so far as I could learn not even among the *fathers*, in the more or less distant homes from which the boys came, was there the type of moral righteousness that a young man could be advised to follow !

Yet from lectures on “ethics” in school, and from “moral precepts” in temples,

some abstract *theories* of morality must have been known. How, then, could we show these young men that Christianity also is not a mere theoretical code, having no issue in the lives of its adherents?

My able assistant, the young Japanese instructor, who had meantime come to live with me, suggested,—or else we evolved the idea together,—that if we could get a student to come and *live with us*, we could help him to apply the principles of Christianity, hour by hour, to the practical problems of student life; and thus develop from their own number an example that would solve our dilemma. We invited one of the older boys to share our humble home, and he gladly came. Then others asked to come, and were admitted, as far as there was room; till only a disused and rat-infested attic remained. And when two more boys came to ask admittance to our "*family*," we had to tell them that the attic was their only hope.



Kitchen in old House—with the first cook.



We made a tour of inspection and found such a dilapidated, doorless, windowless, dusty and dingy space as *you* would have thought unfit for a hen coop. Yet our young friends settled the matter with the dictum: "We believe we can fix this up all right; and anyway it doesn't matter about the *room*, we only want to live with you!" Some laborers to clean, a carpenter for stairs and windows, and the spring vacation of the boys themselves devoted to paper-hanging and the like, produced the needed room. Thus finally, these two also joined us. To one of them I must refer again at some length, and, unless I am greatly mistaken, there will yet be many, in many lands, who will hear of him.

Our family now numbered eight young men, besides ourselves and our housekeepers. And so well had the experiment worked that these were the first fruits of the work, both in time and in zeal for the spread of the Gospel.

The little house was overtaxed. We were "*close friends*" in too many senses; and besides we felt that if we had more with us, results might be greater. So we set out to rent a larger house. But search as we might, no suitable place could be found. And this was *providential*, tho at first—like so many of the providences that have shaped this work better than our plans—it seemed a calamity.

Nothing was left, if we hoped for advance except the very thing we should have thought of long before: namely, to *build* a suitable house. So was evolved the idea of a Y.M.C.A. Building, that should embody not only quarters for a larger "*family*" of students, but also facilities for social and intellectual and spiritual service to the whole student body, should they care to use them. Since our own savings were very meager, we had to apply for outside aid in this project; and for this we formally organized as a Y.M.C.A. and then appealed to Ameri-

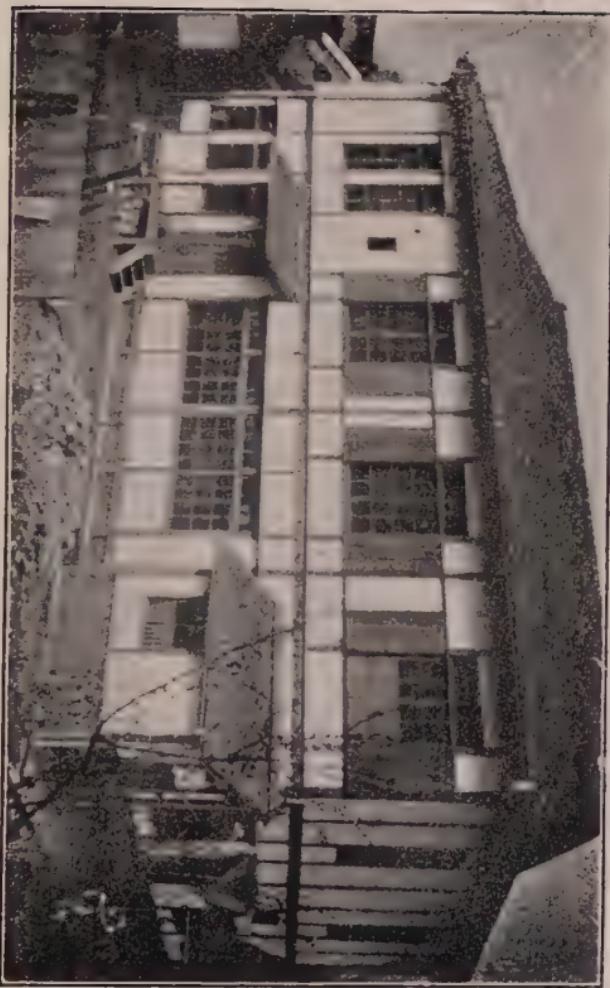
can friends, in a circular letter that was addressed to only about thirty individuals, for assistance. A quick response encouraged us to go ahead, and presently we had the plans worked out and the money in hand.

But here we met with another trying obstacle. Not every one was delighted with the spread of Christianity, and we found to our chagrin that not a square foot of ground would be sold to us for a Christian building ! Here was indeed a set-back ! Followed weary and unsuccessful days of search for some out-of-the-way lot that might be got by over-paying, and efforts to buy thru outside agencies. And then when we were despairing and about to give up,—we were granted another demonstration of where the Power that was really carrying forward this work had its Source. And this was the way of it :—

A middle-aged Japanese man came to our town one day, bought the most desirable

corner lot in the place, and then called upon me to tell me why he had bought it. Many years before he had lived here as a boy. Later he had gone to the city of Kyoto and established a dairy. There he had come under the influence of that great Japanese Christian, Joseph Hardy Neesima, and had become a Christian himself. Almost immediately the idea had possessed him that he must build a church in the town of his boyhood. That had been fifteen years before; and during all those years he had been saving, little by little, for this one purpose. To-day he had purchased the lot where later the church should be erected!

The reports of our own work here had encouraged him to believe the time was near for that church to be realized. He had come to thank us for our efforts, and to propose mutual co-operation. And this co-operation on his part meant that half the choice location he had just secured was to be ours for our Y.M.C.A. Building!



Herbert Andrews Memorial Y.M.C.A.—cur. first building—1907.



How we had worried, and fretted, and despaired over our inability to buy some little back-street lot! And lo! for fifteen years our God had been preparing for us the best spot in the town! So we learned our second lesson.

Long before this, the beginnings of the little church our new friend was working for had been made. When we came to prepare for a church into which we might introduce our student converts, we found that already there were a few townspeople who in times past, and some of them in places remote, had accepted the Faith. And this tiny group were assembling Sunday by Sunday, in a little house belonging to one of their number, to encourage each other in their mutual ideals. Here was a beginning; but there was no pastor, and no one qualified to act as such. So we began to hold church services, in which I acted as preacher, organist, and choir, with the co-operation of the young Japanese instructor, who was

in everything the more efficient half of the team. The first Sunday there were five in the audience. But it grew rapidly. Secret believers appeared, who had awaited such an occasion to show their colors. But more especially the students began to attend. Many became so much interested in the Bible classes that they were eager for further instruction at the "church." Fortunately for me, most of the audience had never heard a real preacher, so that they did not know but that the hour long Bible lessons that I inflicted upon them were the regular thing. I was able to supplement the Bible class lessons by the "church" dissertations, so that they worked together for quicker results than either alone could have brought. Soon Bible class members began to be baptised. We had to send as far as Kyoto for an ordained missionary or a native pastor to come and officiate at such times.

In less than three years that humble beginning had so prospered that the little



The old house in which the church meetings were held 1905-07. Bought by 'Omi' Mission in 1922 to remodel into a residence.



congregation, altho composed of people of small means, was able to build for itself a modern church edifice, and to raise the salary for a native pastor to shepherd the flock. And not a cent for building, salary, or current expenses has been given them from America.

It was only natural that we should feel greatly enthusiastic over the outlook, with the large Bible classes, producing results; with a growing church; with a student Y.M.C.A. whose building was soon to rear its beacon-like walls above the squat structures of the neighborhood. We began to anticipate a speedy sweeping of the Good Tidings thruout this whole neglected province, which had never, from the beginning of time, had an adequate chance to know what is offered freely, and means so much, to most civilized sections of the world to-day.

But sometime before the building of the *church*, there began another movement in

our community, of a very different nature, and one which was destined to affect us deeply.

I have already mentioned the presence of a large number of Buddhist temples in the town. Investigations showed that the train of priests connected with these were of an ignorant, indolent class, and that nothing,—beyond a routine of official ceremonies, which amounted to little, and the pompous and costly burying of the dead, which services brought in their chief revenue,—was being done by them. This comatose luxury was disturbed by the advances of the Christian movement. And when the first flush of popularity had given place to such substantial evidences of results and permanency as the organizations and their proposed buildings, these priests aroused themselves for resistance. They protested with the school authorities to stop the activities of the American teacher, and even sent direct threats to me; but without effect. Then

they turned their energies to inciting the people against us.

Now there was in the student body a small group of the unruly element whose chief enjoyment seemed to be to fight or to break discipline. Two big bullies, especially, were notorious for insubordination and the invention of mischief. And it was not long till these two fellows had formed an opposition party, which they very ably headed, for the sole purpose of banishing the Y.M.C.A. and Bible classes forever from the school. They had been once or twice suspended from school for past offenses toward regulations ; but here was promised a season of unique sport, which,—being directed against a movement already coming under criticism and priestly disfavor,—might escape punishment, and even win for its perpetrators distinction in the community !

It would be a long story to relate in detail the developments of the following months. Those men were not fools, altho they had

failed to pass their examinations so frequently and "repeated" so many terms that they were older than most of their fellows. They had rather more than average ability, as events proved. It was merely misapplied. They led a systematic and resourceful campaign of abuse and persecution, such as, I believe, the annals of modern missions in Japan have seldom, if ever, paralleled.

In the earlier stages, when a Christian boy, or even one who merely attended a Bible class, entered the school grounds, he would be greeted with a torrent of ridicule, invective, abuse, and contumely, hurled at him from the throats of a jeering mob in the windows above the entrance. Public ridicule is a bitter blow to an Oriental; yet there were few withdrawals from the Bible classes. Then came a series of petty persecutions, which included harassing in class-rooms during recitations and the mutilating of the books and even the examination papers of the Y.M.C.A. boys. And finally,



Bridge over Hachiman canal, from which one of the students was thrown during the persecutions.



thru a chain of increasing viciousness, force was resorted to ; and the time came when a mob of the opposing students would attack a single one of our group, and leave him, after serious hazing, by the roadside at night.

Then it seemed that something must be done to stop the depredations. Once again I felt a touch of that first-day panic. It seemed a tremendously lonely situation. There was no one of mature age or experience with whom to consult. There was not even a single native Christian of years' standing to whom I could turn. And when my young men came to me for suggestion, I could only refer them—with, I fear, faint assurance—to the One remaining Source of aid.

The situation was discussed in a meeting of these inexperienced boys—only a few of whom were as yet avowedly Christians ; and by them it was determined what should be attempted.

Oh, what a childish, unsophisticated, futile scheme was theirs! And how the opposition laughed with glee and derision when they learned of it! They decided that they could not consistently use *force*, and that the only thing left to try was—*prayer*. It was a simple plan: merely to start for school fifteen or twenty minutes early each morning, and to come to my study and spend the extra time in united prayer for a solution of the problem. And this, they fondly thought, would help matters.

On the first morning, about a dozen gathered at my house. It was an awkward meeting. The participants were not experienced in the routine conduct of such gatherings. Some of them had never even prayed before. Yet I shall never forget that prayer meeting. We knelt in a circle about the room, the first young man began to pray, and others were to follow around the little group. But somehow they could not make it go. The most they had of an



Charter members of the Student Y.M.C.A. (1906)  
who endured the persecutions.



idea about it was that prayer is simply *talking to God*, regardless of who hears; laying the whole case before Him, and leaving the solution with Him. Before they had gone half round the circle one poor stammering fellow, broke down and wept; and that broke the whole group into tears; they were tremendously in earnest. So the poor little prayer meeting ended. And yet the feeling came to me that I had been highly privileged in being present at that meeting; that I had heard real prayer; and that those prayers were heard beyond our roof-ridge. I felt that I who had lately come thither to teach, had that day *learned*; and it seemed as if there *must* be an answer, somehow, sometime.

But, alas! just as the opposing students had prophesied,—it was all in vain. That day the persecution was doubly severe. A *group* of our boys had arrived together, instead of coming into the campus singly, and that only drew extra attention to them.

And their ridiculous praying-scheme furnished only an added incentive for abuse.

Yet those students came the second morning, undaunted, and with them were four additional members.<sup>5</sup> And I witnessed the gradual increase in attendance throughout that month, in spite of the continuance of the persecutions, till at the last session before the holidays the group had grown to more than forty. But I must not run ahead of my story.

Some results began to appear. Not a lessening of the abuse, but a change in the praying men themselves. Conversions were occurring in these meetings. Other prayer-circles were holding special sessions here and there. A group began to pray in the school dormitory. Several times groups met in the fields or on the hills at odd hours. Deep stirrings of dormant spiritual natures were becoming daily occurrences. And altho all this was done unobtrusively, almost secretly, the effects on the lives of the young men could not be hidden. Even their faces

showed the difference; and their fortitude under the persecution could not but impress even their persecutors.

At length these men determined to learn what sort of performances were practised in the prayer-meetings that such results should be obtained; and so they sent a couple of their own group to spy upon us.

And what an astonishing discovery these men made! They crept into the back of the room, scarcely noticed behind the circle of prayers, now grown large, and the praying began. What! not a word of crying for vengeance upon their enemies! Not a murmur of pleading for cunning to overcome! Not even a request for the lightening of their sufferings! No; the petitions were all for forgiveness and salvation for their oppressors; and for themselves such patience and Christlikeness of spirit under their persecutions, that their lives might convince their fellow-students of the Truth they professed! That was too much for the spies.

They were overcome and melted to tears in that very meeting which they had come to report upon.

What they told those who sent them I know not ; nor is it possible here to tell all the steps of the *dénouement*, which included some personal work by individual members of the praying group. But this much must be told : Within the month each of the two leaders of the opposition came voluntarily to my study, singly and unbacked by the other ; each made a full confession, and asked me if I thought there was any hope for him ! And when I assured them that there was the best kind of hope, each went further into detail and told of the plans that had not yet carried, and the secret sins of his own life. Not even their own parents suspect the things that many a boy has told me of himself in the quiet of my dingy attic room, over in that old shanty where we lived thru those first two eventful years ! And when I still pointed out that the very



S. Watanabe  
one of the leaders of the opposition. Now a Church officer and  
superintendent of the Sunday School' in his home town.



fact of his present concern over his past sins indicated the hopefulness for another chance, and turned his plea for personal forgiveness for his injuries to us by saying that we who asked pardon from our Master for so much ourselves, could not refuse the same to a brother man,—then each of them asked to go before the whole group of our students and repeat his confession there.

So I saw the marvelous sight of those two erstwhile bullies standing before the group of young men against whom they had led the bitterest of persecutions, and with tears falling down their cheeks asking for pardon. And not personal pardon only, but asking them to continue to pray for them, that in time they might be worthy to join their number, and to be known, also, as Christians !

So there came about the complete, voluntary surrender of the opposition, without the lifting of a finger of force; thru this same childish, unsophisticated, futile means of *prayer*!

The school and the community had to witness the miracle of the two most unprincipled rogues in the student body suddenly become models of industry, personal character, and zeal for the up-list of their fellows! On Christmas day these two and seven others,—including some of the former opponents and some whom they had maltreated with mob violence,—were baptised side by side at the little church, in the presence of an amazed audience of fellow students and towns-people.

Never from that day to this has there been opposition on the part of the students. Whether they accept Christianity or hold aloof, they have learned to respect the Power they then saw in operation. They had learned their lesson. And I, too, had learned. Such was my third lesson in faith and prayer.

And fortunate it was for me that I learned it then; for the time was soon to come when I should need it sorely.



It was not to be expected that the Buddhist priests, who had started the opposition, would be convinced by our success. Instead, they were only the more alarmed. Their opposition took on a more formidable aspect when they brought it into the open. The leading newspaper of the province was persuaded to publish a series of articles against Christianity in general and against us in particular; and these articles were prepared with great vigor and force, if with small intelligence. Then the priests won over a number of representatives in the Provincial Assembly, and it became a political issue whether or not the American teacher should be permitted to have personal religious convictions! Politics are not so different in the Orient from those in the Occident.

I was asked to call upon the "Commissioner of Education and Religion" at the provincial capital. He explained to me the serious opposition of influential people, whose

disfavor might injure the academy, and advised me to give up the mission work temporarily, until the trouble blew over. I could not "pretend" to give it up; for I felt a matter of that kind ought to be settled, not dodged. This official asked me to call upon him again; declaring his personal sympathy with my side; saying he would use his influence in my behalf, and that he believed he could win the decision in my favor.

Not long afterward he wrote me a letter, which with elaborate explanations and circumlocutions asked a large cash loan! And this, he explained, must be done entirely on the quiet, as his position would be endangered if it were known he had borrowed. I neither had the money to give nor the desire to buy my way into favor. And altho he was emphatic in denying any intention to accept a bribe, his interest turned against me so soon as I refused the "loan." Shortly thereafter a bill was voted thru the

local assembly to cut off the academy's appropriation unless it dismissed me.

Now the principal, who had not been greatly disturbed thus far by the demands and threats of the opposition, was forced to act. He laid the situation before me frankly, and urged me to abandon all Christian activities and avoid unpleasant complications.

It was explained to me that my English teaching had been entirely satisfactory (they had already increased my salary, without my request), and that the only thing needful to insure myself a permanent position, with any concessions I liked, was the disbanding of Bible classes and Y.M.C.A. and my personal neutrality regarding things religious! Even our nearly-completed building need not be a loss, since the authorities would buy it for school purposes!

The principal seemed surprised that I could not accept such terms; that I considered the work of character-building more important than that of imparting English

idioms. And when I had made that definite he urged me to *resign* from the school, to avoid the embarrassment of discharge. But this, also, I could not do; since I felt a principle was at stake. If I should resign, the matter would end quietly, instead of supplying a "test case" as to whether teachers hire out their *souls*, as well as their time and energies for certain specified work. And this was not so slight a question as it might seem, since the Y.M.C.A. at Tokyo was continually being asked to nominate American college men as English teachers for government schools in various parts of the Empire.

Therefore, the inevitable occurred, and at the end of my second year's contract, I was informed that no new contract could be made. I asked for, and received, a signed statement from the principal, which definitely stated that the cause of my dismissal was my "influencing the students toward Christianity." It read:—

"To whom it may concern:

"This is to certify that Mr. William Merrell Vories has been a teacher of English in the Shiga Ken Prefectural Commercial School since February, 1905, and that his instruction and discipline have been entirely satisfactory. His dismissal is due to the objections of citizens of this Ken, most of whom are Buddhists, to his teaching the Bible and influencing the students toward Christianity.

"Signed:

Y. I.,

"Principal."

\* \* \* \* \*

Where, now, were the signs of promise; and of what avail the organizations and the numbers and the building? All that had been built up, and all the pioneering and sowing and cultivating, seemed to be dead loss. At one blow, all had been doomed to extinction!

Of course, I thought of the alternative of staying there and building up the mission, apart from the teaching position. In fact, I do not believe I thought of anything else. But that, truly, was a naïve idea. For even a missionary must have food and a few clothes; and even in Japan such things cost money; and I had invested the little I had saved in that new building—now apparently not to be occupied. Even had we had funds, I was in disfavor and disgrace in the community. Popularly it was believed,—and doubtless the idea was fostered by the priests,—that I had been discharged from the school because I was a dangerous character, exerting a pernicious influence upon the students! What parents would dare allow their sons to come near me,—not to mention permitting them to live in our new Y.M.C.A. Dormitory?

With this forlorn and resourceless outlook was I expected to establish an independent mission? Was not that expecting too much?

Surely God could not ask it. Evidence was pretty strong that my usefulness here was ended; that I was justified in leaving the whole failure, and in going to a more comfortable field of labor. Surely there were plenty of needy places in the world!

And yet why, *why* had God led us thus far, if only to let the thing drop? It seemed unbelievable. And further, there yet encompassed us that multitudinous, mute appeal. It was not the will of these hundreds of thousands of souls, still without the bare chance to hear the Good Tidings, that their chance should be cut off at its dawning. Their need was as great as ever; and none cared for them. If we left, there was no evidence that any Board or any individual would send to their aid! And that appeal would have been irresistible, even had it not been seconded by the voiced appeal of the students and the little community of Christians.

Had I not been a witness to the persecutions of my student friends, and seen their fortitude, their faith, their victory? And now should I—who was counted their preceptor—turn my back and run, because the persecution happened to be directed against *me*? I could not do so, for very shame, even if I had not learned the lesson of it. But it was well for me that I had learned that lesson!

I looked into the treasury, and found we still had two hundred dollars in the bank. Also I found that the final bill of the contractor for our building was just two hundred dollars. We were not in debt. We had a balance of zero to begin upon, as we moved into our new quarters to start the upward fight in the building of the OMI MISSION!

We prayed,—and we *expected*, as much as we could with so little evidence at hand; but the Homeland seemed unusually far away, and the call of kindred ties pulled

harder, while it looked a little gloomy and lonesome near at hand.

And yet, those first days were among the happiest of my life. It was fortifying to feel that I had not sold out my principles to the authorities, and that I had beaten down the impulse to desert. And it was a joy to learn what true friends I had among the students and a few of the citizens. Their solicitude for me could not have been greater had I been a bed-ridden invalid! Love is the universal language, that needs no interpreter; the universal bond, wide as humanity, that can not be severed by political divisions or racial differences. And then the unspeakable sense of the Divine Presence, that seemed more tangible and immediate as we were driven thither by the blasting of other resources, was more than worth the cost.

I had heard of instances such as those of George Müller's orphanage in England and Moody's Institute in America—where remarkable answers to prayer had brought

needed means to carry on missions or charitable work in crises. But it is easier to expect such results when one's work is located in the public eye; and, anyway, when one scarcely knows where the next meal is coming from, it is harder to trust than in times of abundance. Yet even in our isolation we were to see great things.

An American business man traveling in Japan, altho he did not visit our mission, heard about the situation in Omi. He arranged to send us twenty-five dollars a month, thru a friend, without his name being mentioned. For two years I did not know the source of that assistance; but I certainly did realize that it came; and that it came just when we *had* to have it!

This meant bread and butter; but there must be means for developing a whole mission plant: and not for our one town only, but for reaching out thru the teeming towns and villages all round us. Here came into play an old hobby of mine, that pointed

also to a providential preparation from years before.

Away back in my high school days, when I had felt the call of the foreign field, I had sought for excuses to stay at home. Many of these I had set up, only to have them bowled over by the logic of actual conditions. Finally I had hit upon what I thought an admirable plan.

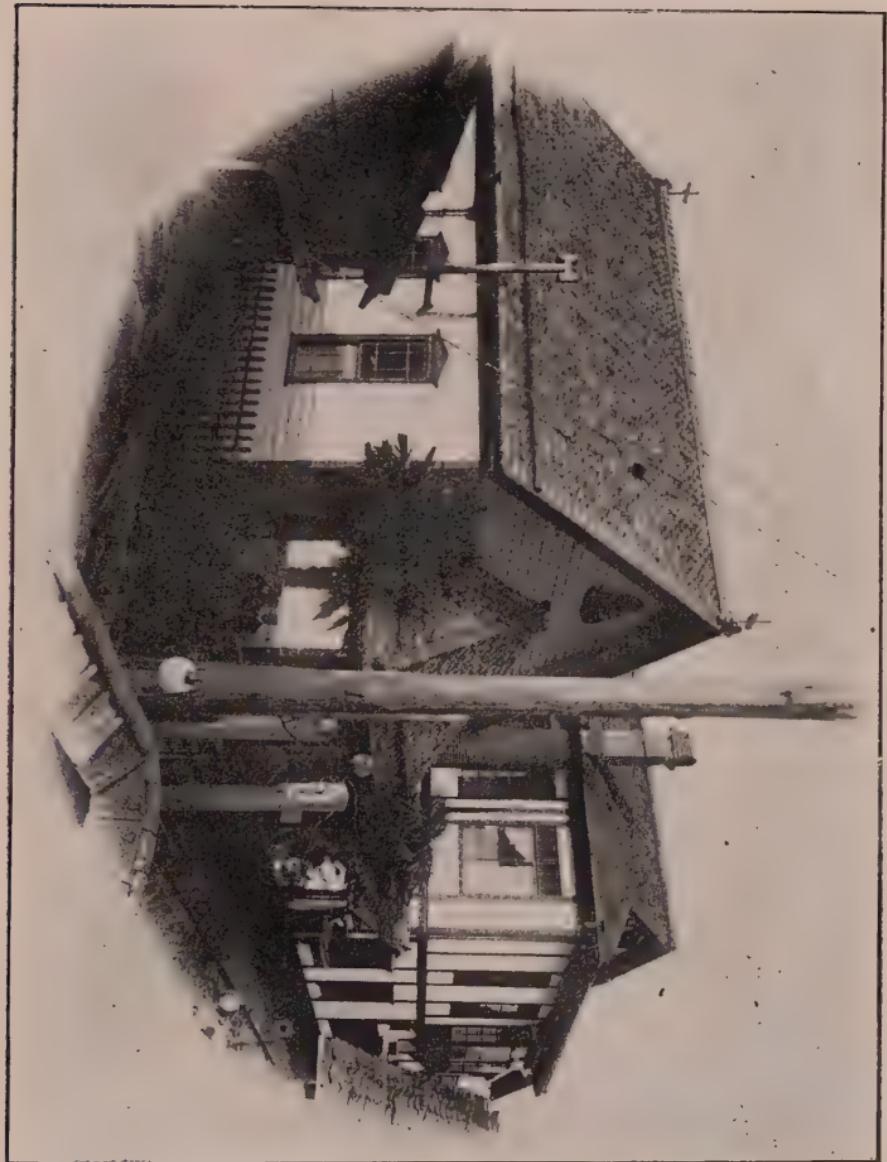
Having a strong liking for architecture and some evidence of latent ability in that direction, I determined that I would become an architect in America, make a large fortune, and send out half a dozen missionaries. That would be so much better for the Cause; and, more particularly, it would excuse me from going out!

This excuse served me for some years, during which I continued to study architecture, as a hobby, before I came to deal quite honestly with the question and to perceive that one missionary in the hand was better than several in the bush of my imagination.

When I finally set out for Japan, I lamented the lost energy spent on architecture, and wished I had employed it in acquiring something useful to the missionary.

Yet here at this crisis the purpose of all this "wasted energy" became apparent. For architecture has proved the chief source of income for our mission. And this is how: I had observed in traveling about the Empire in my vacations, while I was still teaching, that a good deal of uneconomical building had been done by various missions, and that some rather inconvenient buildings had cost over much, where the builders were at the mercy of native contractors. The thought came to me that I might be able to serve other missions while earning support for our own. And so it has proved.

We also began the publishing of a small monthly paper, reporting the progress of the mission, for the benefit of friends in America who had helped in the erection of our first building. And so favorably has the little



Hachiman Church and Y.M.C.A.



*Omi Mustard-Seed* been received, that not only those first friends, but several hundreds of others, have come to subscribe for it, read it, and from time to time send contributions to help us extend the work. In this way has grown up a wide circle of supporters, who not only assist financially, but bear us up thru sympathetic interest and intercessory prayer.

Thus sustained, the feeble beginnings have grown into a far more efficient work than ever the original successes promised, already reaching not only the town where we make our headquarters, but a half dozen others; employing, not one man's spare time after his teaching duties, but the full time and talents of more than fifty workers; and aiming to cover the whole long-neglected Province as rapidly as means permit. It has become evident that the seemingly fatal blow of the opposition was turned by our God into the best thing that could have happened to the work.

This fourth lesson of these years has taught us to look forward expectantly and to plan more widely for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in Omi. And we have had many reasons for believing that the mission is to go on succeeding. Not only the remarkable working out of our quandary at the start, and the rapid growth of the work; but several most unexpected results promise this. But little over three years after we faced the future without resources and in disgrace, not only the means of support was being earned, but even the outside disfavor was largely gone.

In September, 1910, the same principal of the same school from which I was discharged came to me with the astounding request that I come back to the school,—not to teach English, but to give a course of lectures on *Ethics!* And when I suggested that my teaching of ethics would have to be based upon the tabooed Christianity, he said that Christian ethics was just what was wanted,

and that I might feel free to say *whatever I chose*. So I had the peculiar pleasure of standing again in the familiar class-rooms and proclaiming the same principles for which I had only three years before been driven out because I taught them even privately in my own house! I believe I made the presentation even a little more strenuous, since the young men could not escape, being there under the principal's orders!

That was a far greater change in attitude toward us than we could have expected; but an even greater was to be experienced. When we opened the second branch station of our mission, in a town some miles southwest, the modest building we had rented to house the work was not large enough for the public opening services, and the people of the town,—those people who had three years previously been so determined to stamp out our dangerous influence!—gave us, rent-free, their town auditorium in which to

hold the meetings. Then for two successive nights eight hundred and fifty of them crowded into the services, while crowds more thronged the open windows; and these all listened with absorbed interest and liberal applause, for three hours and a half, to a program chiefly composed of three, hour-long Christian sermons!

But more,—among the congratulatory speeches made on this occasion was one by the lieutenant-governor, acting as personal representative of the governor, himself. We could hardly persuade ourselves that three years before this local government had voted to shut off the appropriations of their own school, if it did not throttle the very influence which now the community was being congratulated upon having in its midst!

In the same meetings the mayor also delivered a commendatory speech. No one hearing him could have dreamed that he was none other than the editor and proprietor of that same old “yellow journal” which three

years previously had published the libels against us, which had contributed to our attempted overthrow! And it was his paper that published afterward full reports of our meetings, even to the *sermons*! Truly our God can cause even "the wrath of men to praise Him."

Sitting in those most stirring gatherings and running rapidly over the years past, who could have regretted any of the darker hours, or have counted them hardships; who could have failed to be inspired with confidence and a deepening purpose; and who could have escaped the fancy—and not have thanked God that it was only a fancy—"What if I had deserted! What if I had run away!"

\* \* \* \* \*

But the vindication of one's principles and the favor of those in high places would be of small account in such a work as ours, did it not have an effective hold upon the rising generation of young men, among whom we

especially seek to labor. And so I turn most gladly to speak of the way in which the mission appeals to them.

I might recount the stories of dozens of the students, of young business men and clerks, and of the railroad employees (among whom we have special work), in various parts of our province ; the numbers of those who gather every week in a half dozen voluntary *Bible classes*; the courage of many who suffer hardships as good soldiers of Christ; or the centers of uplift and spiritual power that many of our men are maintaining in the homes or offices or shops to which they have gone. But this account must be confined to but one illustrative example. I want to tell you in outline the story of one of our students.

One of the two who helped to make habitable our attic in the old house so that they might come to live with us, was at that time a second-year boy in the academy. He had shown much interest in the Bible class to

which he belonged ; but when the first converts were won from among its members, he came to me with an odd confession. It was in substance this : “ I enjoy our Bible class very much, and am glad these boys have become Christians ; but I want to tell you about myself, so you will not be disappointed in my case. I can never become a Christian(!), and if one *must* become a Christian if he continues to attend the class, I must stop ; altho I do not want to.”

“ Well,” I replied, “ I do not believe you have a very clear idea of Christianity yet, or you would not suppose there is any compulsion about it. But why can you never become a Christian ? ” Then he explained that his family were Buddhists, he the eldest son, his father dead, and that he would have to inherit the family faith along with the family property ! I told him that no one could inherit Christianity, or be brow-beaten into it, or in any way acquire it, aside from personal conviction and volition. And

I assured him that he might continue to attend the class and that, if he so desired, I should never *ask* him to accept Christianity. However, I added that if he ever came to appreciate the meaning of Christ's life to the world, and His possible meaning to himself, no outside power could prevent his accepting Him. This did not frighten him and he continued to attend the Bible class, the "family" worship of our little household, and occasionally the "church." I kept my promise not to urge him toward Christianity. But within a half year he came into my room one night, in profound emotion; spent the entire night there; and before morning had voluntarily announced his intention of following the Christ whithersoever He should lead him, regardless of family opposition or loss of inheritance, or whatever the cost might be!

He was thus in time to experience the season of persecutions of which I have already spoken; and no other Christian boy

of them all was subjected to severer hardships than he. Yet he persisted and only increased in zeal and purpose, and still believed so thoroly in the work for his fellow students that, when I was dismissed from the school, just as he was graduated, he volunteered to give a year of his time to help us establish the mission. During that year of crisis and privations, he performed all sorts of service, from clerical to menial, for which he not only would accept no salary, but would not even be a burden to me for his living expenses, securing an allowance from his family for that purpose.

Then when we were tided over the crisis, he went, at his family's urgent request, to take a business position in his native city.

Because of his ability (he had graduated near the head of the school), and because of the zeal with which he undertook any task, and because he had a character to win the confidence of his employers,—he was advanced far beyond others of greater years

and experience. He became a marked man, refusing flattering offers from various sources, to stick to the course that he had entered upon. Finally toward the end of two years he was informed that the next year he was to be in line for the management of a new branch of the corporation. That meant a great increase of salary, social position, influence and luxury, with possibilities of partnership in the concern, and all that a young business man might picture of success.

On the eve of this great good fortune, he came into a sudden experience of which he afterward told me in detail. Wakening in the night, he began thinking over this new opportunity and its relation to his whole life. As he thought out the causes that had led to his success, he traced everything back to the day he stood out for the conviction of his new-found faith in the Christ, and he saw that his Master had made him what he was. Then there came the vision of the students

back in the old school, and the young men of all that province of Omi, where the school stood ; and he thought of what the same Master might mean to all of them,—if they but knew ; if there were messengers to tell them ! And they were being told, too, to some extent, and increasingly. But it was a *foreigner* who was devoting his life to telling them. While *he*, who knew so well what the Good Tidings might mean to a young Japanese, was preparing to put his life into—winning personal success !

He was no make-believe Christian, and this reasoning was enough. After a night of prayer, he wrote me the next morning that if he was needed in the Omi Mission, he would resign all and come back to the work.

Was he *needed*?—Oh, how badly we need men, by dozens and scores, to man this wide, populous, unevangelized valley ! And him, of all others, for his talents and consecration, for his familiarity with the whole situation and his experience in its work, we needed.

But we were, as usual, running beyond our income, with our force as we stood ; how could we add another so high-priced a man ? I could not write him a refusal, so I answered that I would come to his city and talk it over with him.

I tried to explain to him, when we met, but he was too eager to talk about the work, and his joy in having determined upon the sacrifice for it.

The salary ? Oh, I had not understood him. He could get a *salary* where he was, if that were what he was looking for. No ; he wanted to *give his life* to his Master's service !

Living expenses ? Had I forgotten the small estate that was to have been inherited with the family faith ? In a few months it would be his, but *without* the faith appendage. That was a small amount, but enough for his needs ; in fact, there would probably be some surplus to contribute to the mission !



E. V. Yoshida.



Thus Yoshida came back to the work. Is it strange that results began appearing in increasing measure? Is it strange that we expect the Mission to go forward in its task of offering uncared-for Omi the chance which it had never had to take its own place in the Kingdom of our Christ? Is it strange that during my next American tour the people responded to our appeal for funds to equip our various branches with buildings? Is it strange that we can thank God for the privilege of having a part in such a work, even tho it should mean "fellowship in His sufferings"?

Thus the hobby and the far-away dreams of one, the life-purpose of another, and the prayers of a third were shaped together, despite the separation of years in time and continents in space, by the Lord of the Harvest, to work out His plans for a remote and uncared-for portion of His vineyard.

So was planted a little *Mustard-Seed* in far-off Omi. In its planting was the hand of

God · and “if God be for us, who can be  
against us ? ”

PART II.

"IT BECOMETH A TREE"



## PART II.

### "IT BECOMETH A TREE."

THE second period of Omi Mission naturally begins with 1911-12—a year after the beginnings recorded in Part I.

First of the more significant developments of the past nine years we should count the addition of mission work by and for *women*. Our first years were devoted to work among young men by young men. Our establishment was a sort of Y.M.C.A. and monastery combined. But with the first married couple to join us and the marriages of some of our young men, the way was opened for an all-round work to reach all our community.

The beginning was made when Mother Yoshida came to visit her son, and after some months in our midst found her way to Christ—as her son had done before her, and as he

had prayed for six years she might do. From an ardent Buddhist and official of a temple, she became one of our most earnest workers and until her sudden death in May 1918, was the "Mother" of Omi Mission and the spiritual mother of many about us.

The first "foreign" couple to come to us was the Rev. and Mrs. Paul B. Waterhouse, both graduates of Hartford Theological Seminary. Mr. Waterhouse had spent a year with us as a volunteer worker in 1908-9, between his college and seminary courses, and had determined to join Omi Mission after a tour of Missions in Japan, Korea, China and India, seeking the place for which he felt God had fitted him. With their coming, the first foreign *family* among our group was set up, in the first American-style residence, to become the first example of a Christian Home and the center of influence on the family life of Hachiman. Of course this made possible definite efforts for women and girls, and from then onward



"Mother" Yoshida, 1865-1917.



Mrs. Kiyono W. Yoshida.

this has been an increasingly important part of our Mission's activities. Clubs, Bible classes, socials, working groups, and singing and domestic-science classes have provided appeals to the women of this conservative country town, where the young ladies—even those returning from boarding schools—were accustomed to being secluded in unhealthy idleness awaiting marriage. It meant much to the local Church, as well as to the Mission, to have this able and consecrated couple join our forces. To the struggling Mission it meant doubly much that the added workers brought with them their own support: first the financial relief and second the fact that they *chose* Omi Mission without remuneration, rather than any of the many other openings with salary attached.

Not long after this women's work began, its staff was augmented by the marriages of Mr. K. Murata—one of the first of our workers who had been among my pupils

here—and of Mr. E. V. Yoshida—whose story you know from part one. Mrs. Murata was graduated from the Baptist Bible Women's Training School in Osaka and had had experience, as well as training in evangelistic work. Mrs. Yoshida was graduated from the Friends Girls' School in Tokyo, and had worked for some years in evangelistic work in the north. It is a happy and somewhat unusual situation that both these ladies are so fluent in the use of English that, like their respective husbands, they can not only use it for their own reading and conversation, but also can interpret for foreign guests who sometimes preach for us; and either of them can not only *help* her husband, but even *substitute* for him in evangelistic work or interpretation. Besides Mrs. Murata and Mrs. Yoshida, we have in Mrs. Takeda, wife of the evangelist of our Gospel Launch, the "*Galilee Maru*," a third lady with as fluent command of English as her husband; well trained and

Rev. Paul B. Waterhouse.



Mrs. Bessie P. Waterhouse.





Rev. and Mrs. I. Takeda with  
their family, as they came to  
Omi Mission in 1911.

thoroly consecrated to the work of the Master. Mrs. Takeda embodies the rare combination of conspicuous patience and humility coupled with conspicuous ability and zeal.

Thus the Mission was greatly enriched and its work extended by the coming of all these women workers.

Finally the extension of the work for and by women and the homes was augmented by the coming of Mr. and Mrs. John Vories, the parents of the founder of Omi Mission. One of the most notable incidents of our experience, and one which has been widely commented upon thruout Japan, has been the remarkable way in which "Mother" and "Father" Vories have found their places in Omi Mission and adapted themselves to the untried conditions of a strange land, and, altho coming out too late in life to undertake the very difficult language, have become indispensable in their respective niches. The general work

for women offered much for Mother Vories, but her special forte has become even more the influencing of small groups of young people, both boys and girls who keep her busy almost continually with English Bible Classes. Particularly young men of from fifteen to twenty-one appreciate her motherly love and advice, and dozens who have gone to various schools or business positions continue to correspond with her. More than one "hard case," whom we had despaired of after years of ordinary efforts, has been won to Christ thru the personal work of Mother Vories.

In the business office we had been for some years seeking a man to take full charge of the treasury and relieve us of all responsibilities in that department. Both the Mission's small resources and the architectural department's extensive accounts meant much work and the likelihood of confusion. Here Father Vories' business and banking experience has come into play and puts



Julia E. ("Mother") Vories.



John ("Father") Vories.

him just in his element. But it is even more surprising and a stronger appeal to our community that he is among the most enthusiastic of our tennis players after office hours, and by example influences many to healthful living.

The presence of these workers means that the Mission is able to touch a much wider circle and in a more thoro manner than in its earlier years.

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Next to the broadening of our local activities in Hachiman, comes the long-anticipated reaching out to the villages surrounding us. From the top of Hachiman Mountain, we had looked out over our field and longed to reach the hundreds of hamlets stretching away beyond the horizon among the hills and mountains that fence in the province; more than fifty such villages being within sight. Also we had gazed across beautiful Lake Biwa lying before us and had talked and dreamed of a motor

boat by which to get to the hundred thousand on its opposite shores. Now we were to begin the realization of these hopes. Thru the consecrated generosity of Mr. A. A. Hyde, of Wichita, Kansas, we were enabled to secure a thirty-five-foot motor launch, equiped for the accommodating of from four to six workers on tour. This launch is called the *Galilee Maru*, and has made it possible to reach West Omi even more effectively than we have yet been able to cover our landside neighborhood.

One of the providences of this feature of our work was the early training of Mr. Waterhouse in managing a larger boat off the California coast, so that he was able to pass the Japanese Government examination and obtain a license as Captain. This work has become the especial charge of Mr. Waterhouse and of the Rev. I. Takeda, who joined our Mission several years earlier, coming from the post of College Pastor at Doshisha, in Kyoto, because of his convic-

tion that the neglected rural evangelization was the greatest need of Japan and that Omi Mission was attacking the need in the right way.

They, with the able assistance of the engineer and others of our workers, spend about half their time in West Omi, visiting new villages and the several groups already formed by the efforts of their first five years. Their weekly audiences usually exceed one thousand. A site has been bought at Imadzu, the chief town on that side of the lake, for a permanent center. When funds are sufficient, we plan to have here a model plant for an all-round work to reach all elements of that community and become the center of West Omi efforts. Several hundred dollars have been given toward this fund, and we hope it may soon be adequate. One of the gratifying developments of the work of the *Galilee Maru* is its use as a training plant for evangelistic workers. One or more of the younger

men usually accompany the regular workers and by assisting learn how to go at new situations. The engineer—Mr. M. Nishizawa—who was converted on board the boat, has become at his own suggestion the *cook* as well as engineer, thus saving expense. It means more than a Westerner can appreciate for an Oriental with the license of an officer to be willing to perform such service. It shows he has caught the idea of the Kingdom we are working for.

There is probably not a man, woman, or child on the western shores of Lake Biwa who does not know the *Galilee Jium* and its welcome bespeaks a sympathetic hearing for its Message.

Of course, there is also opposition. Just as in the first two years the Buddhist priests of Hachiman tried to drive me from the town, no sooner does a group in West Oai become somewhat regular in its attendance upon meetings, than a counter movement is started, which often temporarily disturbs



The *Galilee Maru* on the Lake.



things. But the progress of understanding and the unremitting work of the boat crew sooner or later weather such storms, just as the *Galilee Maru* itself comes thru the sudden squalls of Lake Biwa.

Among the villages on the east side of the lake, where trains and bicycles can take us, and later an automobile may serve, there is developing a contact thru regular meetings in a number of places and occasional campaigns among others. Some of our younger workers go out to conduct Sunday Schools in neighboring villages. Then there are Noda and Adzuchi that have been worked sufficiently to have their own infant organizations.

In Noda, after some years of visiting, a group of a dozen farmers have formed their own "church," which means that they have regular services at their own expense, altho as yet we send men to preach for them. Here we had one experiment in economic service. The Christian farmers, under the

leadership of one of their number who had spent several years in America, undertook a new industry which made use of their undeveloped ground for growing tomatoes, and then canned them to sell to hotels and other distant customers. The seeds for this, and for a field of asparagus, we got for them from America. Later they undertook to produce a tomato sauce, and this was so successful that they won the first prize at a national exhibit and were able to get a quarter per case higher price than their competitors. This is both a help to these younger believers, and serves to illustrate to their community that Christians can accomplish something worth while commercially without giving up their principles.

At Adzuchi, the center of the work which has been organized now into a "church," is one farmer, Mr. K. Okada, who was converted thru our early work there. He has made his home the spiritual center of the village, and is overcoming the



Mr. K. Okada, with the bicycle he bought for evangelistic touring with money from the sale of the family Buddhist shrine.



severe and bigoted persecution of a most conservative community in the grip of the old village system, which makes individual initiative a crime punishable by ostracism. Only his having his own fields, so as to be self-sustaining, made it possible for him to live in the village during the first years of his open espousal of Christianity. The results of his devotion and zeal are becoming evident now in the growing group—including his own family—that is being drawn together in the little church. One of Mr. Okada's fields he has set aside that its entire output may be devoted to the support of the work. Thru this and the mites of the others in the group, assisted by a monthly contribution from Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Canady, of Glenwood Springs, Colorado, the Adzuchi work continues, without being an expense to the Mission. If we could raise up an Okada in every village in Japan, the long-despaired-of rural evangelization problem would be solved.

Other villages are being entered, such as Musa, Maibara, Ohara, Yōkaich, and Hinoyama in East Omi, and Katita and Imadzu (already mentioned) in West Omi. But there is another means of approach which is very effective in pioneering in unreached districts, and that is *News paper Evangelism*. This is being carried on in various missions in Japan in somewhat differing forms. As we have been employing it in Omi, it consists in keeping notices in the provincial papers, inviting inquiries regarding Christianity and offering to send literature anywhere in the province. Upon receipt of a new inquiry, a good booklet is sent and also a blank form for the applicant to fill in—which gives us data as to his family, his age, education, previous religious connection, if any, and such information as will enable those in charge of the department to judge as to what type of books will be best suited to his need. A circulating library is kept to lend these inquirers, and a monthly

paper in Japanese (The *Kohan-no-Koe*, or Voice at the Lakeside) is published to mail to all these scattered seekers after Truth.\* Some of our most interesting converts, such, for example, as Mr. Okada of Adzuchi, got their first impulse to follow Christ from this correspondence evangelism. We have now an experienced Japanese worker who gives his whole time to this work, and as others help in the office work connected with it, he is able to make tours of visitation to distant inquirers who seem from their letters to be ready for personal leading.

This method serves to reach the remotest corners of our province and is able to bring the Truth to hundreds whom we could not reach in any other way. Its future promises even more than has thus far been realized.

Omi Mission started its existence as an organized work with two young men and a student Y.M.C.A. building, but with no

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\*Omi Mission also publishes a series of original Tracts.

funds and the opposite of a good reputation, as we have seen, only about fifteen years ago. It is among the miracles that have attended its progress that we find not only the more or less extensive general evangelistic work already described, but also out of its original penury a number of institutional features fairly well equipt.

The first of these, after the original Student Y.M.C.A., is the *Railway Y.M.C.A.* work at Baba and Maibara, the two junction towns with large shops and staffs of four hundred or more employees in each.

In 1911, thru the generosity of the Arthington Trustees, of Leeds, England, we were enabled to erect a three-story building for the Baba work, while that at Maibara has had thus far an old Japanese building on a site which we bought with funds contributed by a friend in Honolulu.

In the Maibara quarters only the simplest



In the Play-Ground at our Maibara Plant  
(showing Main Building, at left, and Auditorium, at right).



Maibara Plant. Residence and a corner  
of the Auditorium.

of activities have been possible heretofore, because of lack of equipment: There has been a Sunday School—or children's meetings—of over a hundred enthusiastic children, and occasional meetings for the men, while a reading room has been open to all. But within the year we expect to have an adequate plant thru circumstances that make it necessary to transfer the principal part of the Baba work to Maibara. The railway is making changes which will remove the station from Baba and make our plant there unnecessary. Just before we were to remove the building entire, the Mission of the United Brethren, which has work in a nearby town, proposed to purchase our plant for their student association work. It thus came about that we could build a new plant for Maibara with the proceeds of the first Arthington Building plus the amount provided for removal, and at the same time leave that old building to continue in similar Christian work.

During its nine years of operation the Baba plant made several notable records. It became in reality a community center — being used by the people, young and old, for all sorts of activities. Its regular work included night-school, boarding house, reading and game rooms, Sunday School, Bible classes, lectures, concerts, and a physical department for *jujitsu*, which was exceedingly popular.

Thru this work an increasing number of both railway men and students were led to Christ and several were enlisted in Christian work. From it came our Mr. T. Yamada, its most successful secretary. His case alone would have made the institution worth while. Born into a dissolute family, having had only three years schooling, and having drifted into a position in the railway shops after a checkered career in factories and odd jobs, he came to board at our dormitory, without any leanings toward Christianity. There he was led by the secretary



Maibara Plant. In the Reading Room.



Mr. and Mrs. T. Yamada, in charge at our  
Maibara Plant.

to attend church, Bible classes, and other meetings, till he felt a desire for a new life. The change in his whole outlook was truly a revolution. He had the first degree in the art of *jujitsu*, and became the voluntary leader of the new physical department. Under his charge it soon became one of the most successful departments of the work, both in numbers and in moral and spiritual influence. Mr. Yamada realized what Christ had meant to him and lost no opportunity to try and help others find themselves thru Him.

When the secretary in charge had to leave, there was no suitable successor in sight—except Mr. Yamada. He was given a trial at full management, on condition of continuing his study of *jujitsu* in Kyoto in spare time, so he could obtain the second degree and have that much added authority in his work. He not only won the degree but also made the best record the Railway Y.M.C.A. had achieved in its history, in all

departments, including the number of converts.

One incident illustrates his thoro devotion. At the final examination for the second degree, there were fourteen candidates. They urged him to join them in drinking *sake* to fortify themselves for the test. It was somewhat of a ceremony, as well as a mere imbibing of alcohol. When he refused he was ridiculed and abused by all the rest; but would not yield his principles. In the rigorous test he alone passed. He had prayed thru the contest that Christian Temperance might not be disgraced!

In April, 1920, Mr. Yamada was married to Miss Toku Hosoki, a graduate of one of the best Mission schools for young women, Doshisha Girls' School, and a kindergarten teacher of experience—who chose to share the Christian service of this young man from the ranks because of his character and consecration.

The completion of the new plant in

Maibara ought to make it possible for this young couple, and those who will help them, to enter upon a still greater work.

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The second institutional work of Omi Mission and the greatest in size and influence, is the Omi Sanitarium which was opened for patients in June, 1918.

Five years before, the appalling ravages of tuberculosis in Japan—then causing 133,000 deaths per year—had caused us to consider means of combatting the scourge. We were connected with the original Antituberculosis Association of Foreigners in Japan, and I was secretary of the organization until its merging in the Japanese association. But we felt a growing need of a demonstration of what can be done with proper equipment, using fresh air, rest, and nourishing diet, as the best sanitaria in America were doing. In spite of the great cost involved, because no other Mission seemed likely to undertake such a demon-

stration, we determined to try. We had a small farm in a beautiful hillside location less than a mile from Hachiman, which had served us for some years as a point of contact with farmers, as well as being a source of food supply. This we finally decided to devote to the project as a site. The illness and death of one of our young men in the Architectural department and his plea for such a work just before his death, to bring spiritual peace and hope to such cases no less than to attempt a physical cure, hastened our efforts to realize this work. A number of friends from abroad became interested and gave money for unit cottages or equipment, and finally Miss Mary R. Tooker, of East Orange, New Jersey, gave the central building in memory of her mother Anna Danforth Tooker.

Thus the building equipment was provided so as to open the work. To man such a plant was an even more serious problem than to construct it. But as in the



The Anna Danforth Tooker Memorial Building at Omi Sanitarium.



In one of the Wards.

beginning of the other features of this Mission, God had been preparing His instruments for His work.

In my first years of teaching there had graduated from the Hikone Middle School a young man named Tsutomu Tominaga, who was among the first converts of my Bible class there and the first to express his sympathy at my dismissal. This young man had gone on thru college and the department of Medicine at the Imperial University in Kyoto—where in his busy student days he found time to be superintendent of a Sunday School of 300 children and to help in the choir of his church. He had taken honors from primary school to university. We talked, whenever I saw him, of the future Sanitarium and of his becoming its head physician. Three attacks of pneumonia during his senior year laid him flat with a development of tuberculosis. The University doctor feared it was a hopeless case. But when I called at the

University hospital to see him, he only said that God was granting him this experience to better fit him to treat tubercular patients more sympathetically. As soon as he could travel, he came with a nurse to the doctor's cottage—the first building on the Sanitarium site,—and there gradually regained health and strength while the plant was building. The length of time required to secure funds gave him a full year on the site before the main building was begun. In that time he took sextant records of sunrise and sunset, for all seasons, in the pocket between the north and west mountains that shelter our Sanitarium grounds. So it was possible to locate the building in such a position as to secure the maximum annual sunshine in all important rooms—an advantage which probably few hospital buildings have enjoyed !

By careful planning—based upon the assembled data of books and magazines



The "five-point" Patients' Cottage at Omi Sanitarium  
(Each of the five projecting rooms given by a different friend).



In the Laboratory.

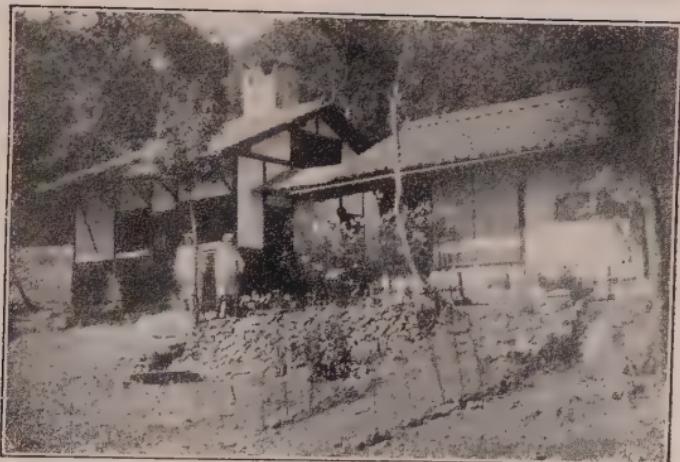
from all available sources, and upon a trip I had made in 1910 thru Europe and America—and by watchful contracting, we were able to secure a truly modern and complete group of buildings. Most of the equipment was imported from America, and is of good types. So the Omi Sanitarium, altho small, became at once a model, easily the best in the Empire. Several Christian nurses were available. An experienced hospital cook—who was anxious to come to us, even at a reduced salary, because of some courtesy we had shown him years before—was secured for the first two years. A second physician appeared, who needed treatment and later became assistant to Dr. Tominaga, and he proved to have been also one of the pupils of those early teaching days! His conversion came during his treatment in the Sanitarium.

Then there was the big question of a business manager for the whole Sanitarium

plant. Here, again, provision had been made years before. Mr. Watanabe, the father of Mrs. E. V. Yoshida, is a Christian of many years standing, with twenty years or more of experience in his local town office, in finance and in the management of a staff of workers. His coming to the Sanitarium adds not only the needed person, but the value of experience and the dignity of mature years to the new enterprise.

The records of the first two years, for cases cured and for visitors from far and wide, show one of the reasons why the reputation of the Sanitarium is remarkably high and extensive for its youth.

The third of our Institutional features is the Town Y.M.C.A. for Hachiman. The building for this is the original Student Y.M.C.A.—the Herbert Andrews Memorial—which was our first and only plant for several years. In 1920 the activities of this department (which had for



Kitchen of Omi Sanitarium.



Rev. U. Takahashi  
(Pastor of Hachiman Church.)

sometime past been serving as the home for our unmarried workers and the Sunday School class-room building (being next door to the church) were extended to become a *Community Center* under the name of Hachiman Y.M.C.A. This was done under the leadership of our new pastor, the Rev. U. Takahashi, a man of thirty years' experience, known all over Japan, and who came to our work in preference to urgent calls to city pulpits, because he found the objects and methods of Omi Mission most in accord with his own convictions regarding Christian work. An immediate response in the way of paying members and a full program of social, intellectual, and spiritual activities promise to make this one of our best features.

Finally, we have a small public playground for the children, who heretofore have been limited to the streets for recreation. This was not much more than an open

ot with a few pieces of apparatus—popular but unsystematic—until the spring of 1920, when Mrs. Maki Vories, Mr. and Mrs. T. Yamada\* and Miss Misao Tominaga took it in charge and have provided supervision and leadership, which have meant an important feature for helping children to develop cleanly and wholesomely and for reaching their parents thru this service.

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The rapid growth of the Mission would have been impossible but for the parallel development of our Architectural Department which has been the principal source of financial support for the whole enterprise.

In order to prevent the possibility of any funds or property contributed to Omi Mission becoming involved in any future financial embarrassment of the architectural department, the Mission and the architectural company have been incorporated separately and form two independent organizations—altho the company's sole object

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\*Later in charge of Maibara's new plant.



Mr. and Mrs. Larsen.



The Dortzbachs.

in earning money by its professional services is to provide funds for the maintenance of Omi Mission.

Fortunately, the architectural company—which is known as W. M. Vories and Company, Architects—has won such a reputation by its past work that it occupies a unique position—as the only company with a specialized knowledge of all types of *Mission buildings*, thru long experience both as architects and as missionaries, and the only company adding to this experience long and intimate knowledge of Japanese conditions and containing both American and Japanese partners. This means that any Mission in Japan or Korea that cares for economy and efficiency, and prefers to give its patronage to a Christian firm, is practically certain to come to us sooner or later. This fact had increased our patronage to such an extent that before the late War we were crowded with Mission buildings, and even

the reduced rates offered Christian organizations brought in sufficient earnings to permit of the increase of the Mission's activities.

Then came an anxious period at the beginning of the war. Various building projects were postponed, hoping that an early peace would restore economic conditions and mission receipts. This looked like a sudden drop in our income just when rising prices clamored for an increase instead! But once more the Lord of the Harvest was not unmindful. Almost simultaneously with the threatened stopping of Missionary commissions came a sudden demand from Japanese clients for various types of buildings, chiefly "foreign-style" residences of modern type and extensive proportions. Here again our years of experience in this region provided the necessary foundations for a successful service, and the completion of each new house has meant a number of new clients from among the owner's friends.

Omi Mission Workers, May 14, 1921.





Our office building has had to be twice enlarged and more draftsmen have been secured and trained. The old days of two or three draftsmen helping the partners have given place to a staff of twelve to fifteen draftsmen with an equal number of specialists, such as engineers, specification writers, and superintendents of construction, besides the officers of the company. In its first twelve years this "company," or department, has produced as much as the total contributions to the Mission from all sources. In the past two or three years it has produced more than enough to finance the Mission, aside from new and special buildings or equipment. Were it not for the vastness of our field and the pressing need of rapid expansion, the company could support the whole Mission.

But there is another side to the Architectural Company that cannot be overlooked. It is a direct, as well as an indirect missionary means. Many a

merchant or professional man is led to understand our advocacy of Christian principles in business thru observing the demonstration of the Company's methods. Forty-four-hour week, Sunday closing, day-light work, provision for recreation and healthful housing, democratic relations between senior and junior workers, international and interracial comity, and other Christian elements, are shown to be definitely practicable. At least one contractor working out a building from our plans and under our supervision has become a Christian, and a large number of clients have made the trip to Hachiman just to see the Mission work that is interesting enough to cause a professional company to devote its whole profits to its maintenance.

Two recent examples will illustrate this opportunity for wider service thru architecture.

Two years ago, a Japanese department store asked our services upon a business



Main Business Office of all our Departments.

In our Drafting Room (the northern half).



building. In their own sketches they had indicated a dormitory floor for younger clerks under the roof of the main building. Here they proposed to house two hundred young men in a low, dark, hot, ill-ventilated attic. By judicious appeals to the business judgment and social instincts of this company, we were able to lead them thru various stages of wider vision, until the objectionable attic dormitory was not only abandoned, but a four-story fire-proof boarding house was built, in a healthful location, with model dining-room, baths, plumbing, roof-garden, and recreation ground. This Dormitory building has attracted much attention, and is causing other commercial companies to improve housing conditions for their employees.

This year, a large new spinning mill is erecting a modern plant. They called us into consultation on the housing section. We found the manager very responsive to modern ideas, and quite ready to try our

suggestion of fire-proof apartments for the married operatives, as well as for cottages for the single workers. The result is that the living-quarters of the laborers in that company will be quite as attractive as those of the officers, and in many cases, far more healthful and modern than those of the company's stock-holders. So complete was the apartment scheme for married operatives that it was determined to build another unit in duplicate for married clerks of the administration offices.

It thus has come about that this modestly begun enterprise, hidden away in an unknown country town, where friends and strangers alike warned us it was folly to undertake such a venture, has become widely known, favorably thought of, and liberally patronized. And its influence upon all is to recommend Christianity in everyday life.

But a still further element in the Architectural side of our work is its



Karuza, Office (used every July and August) of  
W. M. Vories & Company Architects.



development and enlistment of workers for the Mission. Thus far, it is our nearest approach to the still-needed Training School. From among its forces have come some of the best of our evangelistic workers.

Let me mention three cases briefly.

There is Mr. K. Murata, who was one of my original pupils; one of the most rabidly opposed to Christianity and most in need of its purification. His first contact with the Bible classes was when he came, intoxicated, to try and break up the gathering in my house. The talk happened to be on purity—and smote him with direct force, altho unintentionally. He became an early convert. He was the first draftsman to be trained in our embryonic architectural beginnings. Thru the years his ability in architecture increased as his character developed. His knowledge of and fluency in English progressed so far as to make him one of the best of our interpreters. And with experience came

conviction and ability as a public speaker and a leader. Now he is head of the drafting room full member of the Company and one of the Executive Committee of the Mission. From the unpromising position of being raised by a foster father in a local brothel and of being an open opponent of Christianity, he has become a leader in the Christian community and one of the most respected citizens of the town—a standing demonstration of the power of Christ.

Another of the first students is Mr H. Sato. Because he wasted so much time making sketches instead of studying, he was not able to graduate from the local academy. His adopted parents tried him in various positions, but in all he was unsatisfactory. As a last resort, we were requested to take him into our drafting room in the hope of a reformation. At first the task seemed almost hopeless, but gradually his interest in drawing made him find himself in the work before him and



K. Murata.



Mrs. Tomoe H. Murata.

his association with the Christian group awoke the ambition to be a real man. To-day he is one of our best draftsmen on decoration and one of the most skilful in general work, and he has won a place in the organization. But not only so, he has likewise entered into the Mission activities with his own talents consecrated to the work. As superintendent of the local Sunday School and as one of our chief singers he is a vital part of the evangelistic force.

A third example is from another angle. About five years ago a boy was graduated at the head of the middle school in Zeze, who had been attending Mr. Waterhouse's Bible class for students held in our Baba Railway Y.M.C.A. He had great ambition and his ability promised success. Altho not yet a Christian, the Bible lessons had given him a high regard for Christian principles and a desire for advice from Christian men in determining his career. So he spoke to Mr. Waterhouse about

his life-work plans, and Mr. Waterhouse suggested that he also call upon me, up in Hachiman.

So it was that Mr. I. Namikawa first came to my attention; altho I had once or twice substituted for Mr. Waterhouse at that Bible class in Zeze. Upon his asking my opinion as to how he could best serve his Country, I promptly told him that the most needed men were rural evangelistic workers, since the country districts were most neglected by religious leaders, altho most in need, and also most likely to produce the needed material for yet more leaders in the spiritual world. I also pointed out that hundreds of young men would gladly become political leaders, governors, and professional men of various kinds for their Country, so that he would be little missed from such ranks. He was surprised, reminding me that he was not even a professed Christian.

A second time he came from his home



Mr. H. Sato—in the drafting room.



town to Hachiman to further consult about this question. Again I explained my convictions, and his interest deepened. A third time, he wished to know how one should go about it to prepare for such a career. I pointed out three possible courses. The first two were comparatively easy; the third, as austere as I could picture it, was to enter our own little company of workers, at the bottom of the ladder, and gradually find his place—which in the end could never promise great remuneration, but always offered great tasks to attempt for others. He chose the third.

While he was acting as office boy in the severe heat of Hachiman summer, and most of the staff were at the cool summer office in Karuizawa, an offer came thru his parents from a wealthy physician who wished to adopt him, educate him in medicine, and make him his heir. His parents felt it a wonderful chance. He declined it in favor of rural evangelism.

When my secretary, then a young American, was leaving to enter college, it was young Namikawa, still doing whatever fell to his hand around the office, who perceived that the need was pressing for a secretary to take care of the correspondence and the various interlocking concerns that crowd upon my own department of our work. And he offered to undertake to qualify for the place of most urgent need. This involved learning typewriting. In two months he had the touch method and was writing my letters as well as a typist, and better as a grammarian, than any commercial college graduate with whom I had had experience. In a year, a friend in London, who is at the head of a big company, wrote, in commenting on the get-up of one of our letters: "We can't get better typing than that in London or New York."

And the office records and my own calendar are in better order and my forgetfulness is prodded into near-order by this



Mr. I. Namikawa  
a very poor snap-shot.



young man who has given himself to the building of the Kingdom in the country parts—like Omi. So it was only natural that when Father and Mother Vories went on furlo in 1920, the treasury should be turned over to him in their absence.

The only “training school” these men have had has been the daily atmosphere of our architectural office and of the Mission it supports. We sorely need a fully equiped Bible School to produce and perfect larger numbers of workers ; but in the meantime this department, that seems at first glance purely financial, is proving itself also a school of character-building and of consecration.

In 1920, a further industrial department was added to the Mission. For several years, our architectural department had been called upon to undertake the importation of various building equipment on behalf of our clients ; since local importers failed to stock suitable kinds or quantities of necessary

materials with which to finish up buildings. Such work was not in the regular scope of an architectural office, but there seemed no help for it. Necessities like first-class paints, hardware, plumbing equipment, etc., were either not available at all, or else priced beyond reach.

To properly supply this need, and at the same time to make such service a means of profit, rather than a burden upon us, we decided to incorporate a separate importing department of the Mission. This was done at the end of 1920, under the name **The Omi Sales Company, Ltd.**

Altho this department is as yet in its infancy, there is reason to expect it to become a means of considerable service to the community, as well as a source of further support for the Mission.

As to the *general situation*: how far the quiet work of Omi Mission has removed suspicion and opposition among the people about us, is more important than a count of

just how many have been won to church-membership. We can wait for specific results, if the atmosphere of our community is being gradually made more Christian and the way is being paved for the coming of the Kingdom of God thruout the whole district where we have been called to labor.

Perhaps nothing could better indicate the really radical change in *attitude* toward Christianity in our town than a feature of our local Christmas celebration this year (1921). In the program there were two mixed choruses of about thirty voices, composed of girls from the town girls' high school and young men from Omi Mission, including also one teacher and one student from the local Academy from which I was dismissed for my faith, and conducted by the teacher of music in the girls' high school. They sang Christian anthems, that had required many weeks of preparatory work, in the Christian church, which was packed

full of townspeople. And we were apparently the only ones present who felt it remarkable that this thing should happen in the town which had so feared, suspected, and tried to drive out our modest beginnings of the very work they were thus supporting in public!

Many other incidents illustrate the positive change that has already come to pass. We can only glance at a few. It is significant that the School from which I was dismissed in disgrace, because of Christian activities, came to us in 1910 to secure for the English department—the very post I had held—a Christian American teacher. The only specification was that he be a man whom we would choose and who would be congenial to our group. So we had the satisfaction of securing Mr. F. L. Lorbeer, of Pomona, California, who is not only making good at the academy but also proving a valuable voluntary worker for Omi Mission.

Furthermore, the *Membuso* (Imperia

Department of Education), who are at the head of the whole school system and were when I was discharged, requested me to give a special lecture in Tokyo under their auspices in May 1919. And altho I took occasion to conclude it with a veritable sermon on hygiene and morals, that was calculated to cut off all future demand for my services, they asked for a series, instead of one, for the next season.

And finally there has been quite a flurry of *Buddhist priests* becoming attracted to Christianity thru Omi Mission—the very work which the Buddhist priests originally, and spasmodically since, fought against.

The first priest to come to us was a young man who stopt to eat his lunch at our "Rowe Rest House" beside the road that passes our farm (now the Sanitarium site). Being impressed by a Scripture verse hanging on the wall, and the invitation for any one interested to call at our Y.M.C.A., he came to us one afternoon. He never left

until his death a couple of years later. At first he argued strongly for Buddhism. Then we agreed to refrain from all religious discussion and that he should work in our office for a few months in order to observe from within the workings of Christianity. In seven months he had been baptised at his own request, and he became a most efficient worker. Tuberculosis, which was already at work when he came to us finally took him off--after a lingering period in a little cottage at the farm. It was his death and his appeal for a Sanitarium where tuberculosis victims could at least find the peace and joy of Christ,—as he had, and so die with hope and cheer, if a cure were not possible,—that was the decisive factor in launching Omi Sanitarium.

Another young priest from an island in Lake Biwa was attracted by the work of the *Galilee Man*, and left his temple to come to us. Altho his will was not equal to the strain of the moral breakdown

which he had contracted during his school days in the Buddhist Seminary, so that he fell away, he did not go back to the temple job, and he still expresses a determination to become a true Christian. A third young priest was with us for a couple of years, and finally got a position as chauffeur in a Tokyo family. The priest of the Adzuchi temple—where were posted public notices condemning us—came in person to one of our Mission meetings and apologized, saying he was persuaded Christianity is true.

But the best example thus far is the case of Mr. R. Kamegai. He was the eighteenth generation in a family of head-priests in Western Japan. In order to fit himself to become the arch combatant of hated Christianity, he went thru the Imperial University, specializing in comparative religions under a famous priest scholar. To make his fight doubly effective, he read thru the Christian Bible. And right there he spiked his own guns.

Never was he able to escape the appeal of Jesus' life and words. He temporized by proposing to hold to both faiths; then to synthesize his own; he tried teaching English in a government school far from home, but he only suffered the more from inward unrest, and finally sought out the local missionary for help. The death of his father brought the temple duties to him. He returned to the home office and for a while mechanically performed the rites that meant nothing but heart-ache to him. Then he went to the missionary of that city and after a long study of the Gospel made up his mind and was baptised. He could not remain in his temple. He did not see the type of mission work into which he could enter whole-heartedly. He had heard while in the distant city where he had taught about a peculiar type of mission away in Omi. The little he heard impressed him with its similarity to the idea he had got of the Kingdom of God. He wrote to us, and I

went to see him in person soon after. It seemed at once that his long quest had been answered, and shortly after he came to join Omi Mission.

The tract he wrote about his experience has become a standard for all missions and his magazine articles are widely read and influential. He has helped in various campaigns besides in Omi. At present he is devoting most of his time to a special effort for his home community, which is being backed by the nearby Presbyterian Mission.

Thus we are making some progress among the chief opponents of our work.

Mr. Kamegai is not the only one of our workers who is in demand to help in general evangelistic work in various parts of Japan. It was one of our workers who acted as interpreter for the whole personal evangelism campaign thruout Japan of Prof. Buchman, of Hartford Seminary. There are growing demands for lectures and addresses before Women's clubs, schools, Y.M. and Y.W.

C.As., and even in connection with social work for the employees of large companies —by various members of our staff. Several of our workers are on important national committees of various organizations. And there is usually an offer of a large salary and numerous inducements to some one or another of our group being made by some contemporary mission, or even commercial concern, that has not yet learned that those who have found their life work do not listen to the jingle of money.

Finally, there is an interesting testimonial to the progress achieved in the fact that Omi Mission is said to have put the town of Hachiman on the map. One of the evidences of this is the increasing number of visitors. These are not confined to the foreign tourists who come with introductions from those who have come before. They also include many Japanese people and not a few missionaries. One Bishop has been sending new recruits to his Mission who are to

enter upon rural fields to investigate Omi methods.

Sometimes these guests are of great help to us by their encouragement and advice; sometimes by addresses they give and by direct participation in the work; sometimes they come to the rescue financially by providing for some emergency need or some much-desired bit of equipment. A majority so great as to be significant write back later that in all their travels they have seen nothing more stimulating to faith and courage than this only-lately suspected and opposed little venture in rural missions. And without exception they continue to be firm friends of the work and interested readers of its little organ "The Omi Mustard-Seed," which seeks to keep these friends informed as to our condition.

This small publication is now in its fifteenth year and goes to sixteen countries, besides more than forty states of our own land, and many parts of Japan.

An incident of the providential help of unexpected visitors ought to be in any permanent record of Omi Mission. It occurred at the time the first foreign couple were coming to the Mission force. Funds had been provided for a residence, but where to find the land was a critical problem. The usual method in buying land in the Orient is to employ a "go between" to secretly negotiate a purchase. After numerous futile attempts thru these channels, we were at a standstill. At length we determined to try a radical innovation. We hired the town cryer with his bass-drum to go thruout the town and proclaim on every street corner that we wanted to buy a piece of ground of certain size limits and would pay only market value! People were jolted out of centuries of precedent with the sudden conclusion that we were either crazy or else honest. Within a few days we had twenty offers. Among these was a splendid tract much larger than we had expected.

to get,—and we had no cash to close the offer.

We resorted to very earnest prayer—as so often in other cases.

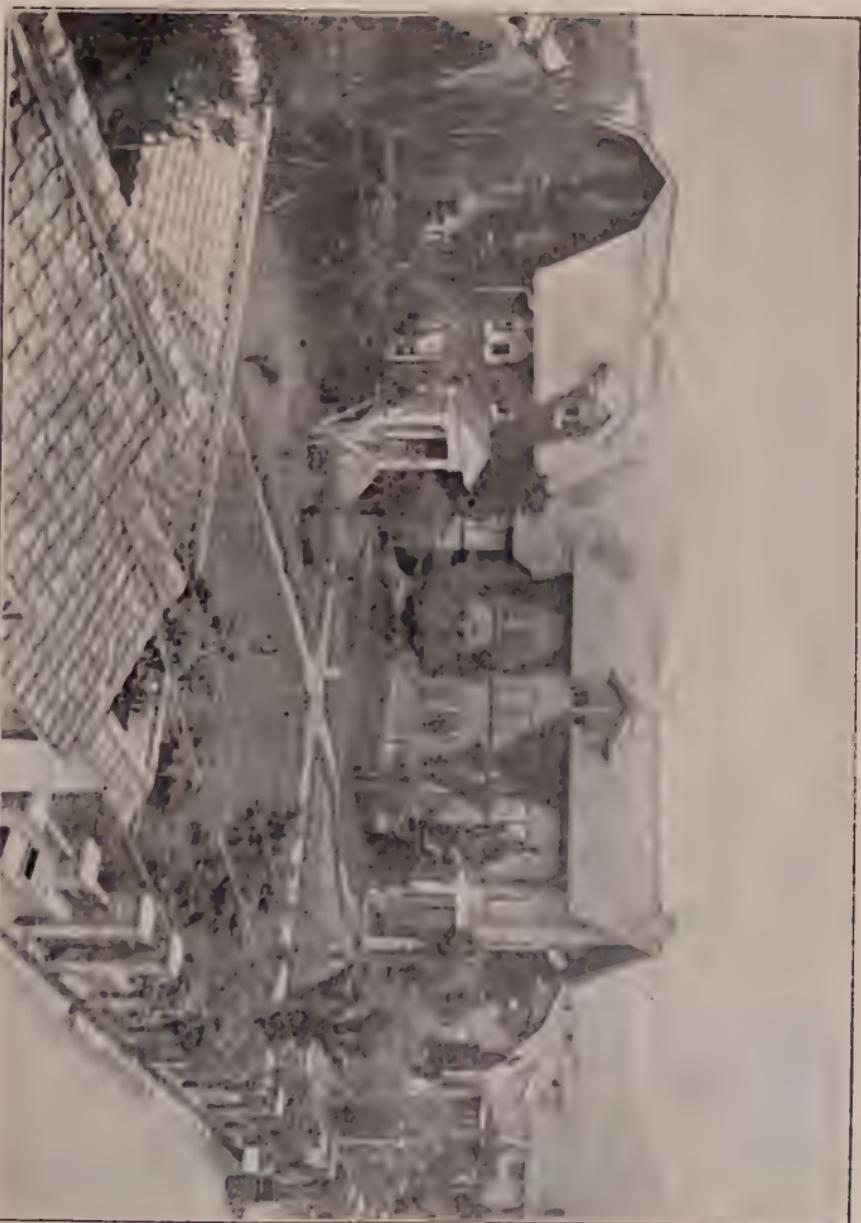
A telegram reached us saying half a dozen visitors would be up for luncheon—it came from the Y.M.C.A. secretary at Kyoto, but did not specify who the guests would be. We met the train and found, in addition to the secretary and his mother, four American ladies, two of whom I had known before—as they were members of the church to which I had belonged in Denver. During luncheon, it began to rain and continued so long as to prevent the guests' seeing anything of the outside work. But they asked for an account of present conditions (as they had read the first edition of "A Mustard-Seed in Japan"). Among other things, the story of our strange procedure in advertising, instead of concealing, our desire to buy land, came out. After the party had left, Mr. Yoshida and I went

out to the sleeping porch and prayed for an hour or two for the means to secure the offered ground. While we were there, a telegram arrived saying the guests of the day would buy the lot.—It had been sent from the train as they returned to Kyoto.

\* \* \* \* \*

And now at the close of this brief outline of the second period in the growth of Omi Mission, I come to the most difficult, yet most pleasant chronicle of all. Another hand ought to write this section; but for the sake of unity I must try to do it.

I said sometime back that in its first stages Omi Mission resembled a Y.M.C.A., and monastery combined. It was a men's work—a young men's work. Personally, I had expected that my own part in it would continue of that type—with some slackening of the emphasis on the adjective. It is only fair to admit that I doubted there existing any lady of the particular traits and training that would fit her to be content with the



Residence Compound of Omi Mission (This land was bought with the gift just mentioned).



The W. M. Vories home in Hachiman.

sort of person my work had made of me. And then another miracle happened—the miracle happened! Numerous friends had wasted their advice on me for years. "For the sake of the *work*," they argued, I should find a helpmeet—much as they would have urged that I get a noiseless typewriter or a duplicating machine! And for the sake of the *work* I felt equally sure of my single course.

Some day when we are too old to work and need some way to provide for old age—if we are denied the boon of dying on the job—I may write a romance from experience; but unless you are pretty young now, you need not expect to read it in the flesh. For here I propose to merely tell very briefly that in the fullness of time the "impossible" helpmeet came to the founder of Omi Mission.

Way back in the early years of Protestant Missions in Japan, the wife of one of the *daimyo*—or kings of the *300 kuni* (or small

nations) into which the Empire was divided before the Restoration of the Emperor in 1868,—became a Christian. After a hard life, during which she exemplified the patience and courage of her Faith in a notable degree, she passed away at an early age, leaving three sons and a little daughter. They were brought up without religious training by family retainers in their father's house. After the Restoration, the father became a member of the House of Peers in the new Government—as did the other *cadringacs*—with the rank of Viscount. The little girl grew up in the atmosphere of the “nobility” in a home prominent in political life. She was given the best education her country afforded, and as her father was a liberal man and had been impressed by his wife's Faith, she was sent finally to a Mission Girls' School, where she was conspicuous for ability in English and music and for unresponsiveness to Christian propaganda. After this study, her stubborn refusal to

marry any of the candidates presented by the family in the regular Japanese fashion, led to some complexities, which were resolved by the plan of sending her abroad to study in America. Her escape, untainted by Christianity, from a Mission school seemed to indicate her safety in a presumably Christian country,—to the minds of the conservative members of the family.

In America she remained not the proposed “two years” but more than eight, and by the wonderful leading of God they were spent under the most favorable conditions—first in Bryn Mawr College and then in the home of the late Miss Alice M. Bacon, near New Haven—where she had not only the personal friendship of that remarkable woman but also enjoyed lectures at Yale Divinity School. It need hardly be said that she had long since found her mother’s Faith, and learned that it had been hers all along, in all the unrest and the

independence of judgment she had experienced in her younger years.

In 1918, she returned to Japan, full of high purposes and hopes, and planning various ways to bring the Truth to her Homeland—especially to the neglected, because unapproachable, class into which she had been born. For some months there seemed to be no organization into which her life could enter without reserve or some handicap from social customs or sectarian bias.

In the meantime, thru frequent social meetings in Tokyo, a friendship had grown up between this pioneer among the women of high birth and the pioneer among the rustics of Omi. Similarity of purposes and of problems first led to more and more intimate exchange of personal opinions. And then the most natural, and at the same time most unexpected, thing in the world happened. Both discovered the reason why their lives had for many years been in

process of shaping by the same Heavenly Father.

And so—in spite of the stir of shocked conservatism over the “first case in history of a Japanese noble giving up rank and nationality in order to marry a foreigner of no rank,” and in spite of the chain of obstacles legal, political, and social that beset the way for many months,—once more in the fullness of time, the plans of the Lord prevailed over the little schemes of men; and when the outcome became inevitable, the family of the bride responded with real nobility in providing the “most impressive wedding ever seen in Tokyo”—a Christian ceremony attended by every rank and condition, that was as appealing as a prayer. So there came, in 1919, into Omi Mission this new element—the founder in his own Home and with efficiency much more than doubled by the consecrated abilities of this God-sent helpmeet.

Incidental to this fact and to the happy-

ness it means, there follows the unpremeditated but positive demonstration in yet another instance that the Kingdom of God which we preach and for which we labor is greater than any sect, nation, or race.

\* \* \* \* \*

We find at the conclusion of this second epoch in the making of Omi Mission an establishment having a force of more than sixty workers in its various departments—where there were, only thirteen years before, two lone youths, a Japanese and an American, without resources and under the cloud of misunderstanding in their community; and a plant worth more than \$120,000.—without debt—where before a single building stood, only partly equip't, and with a treasury amounting to zero. However, not the size of the plant, but its adaptability to the peculiar conditions we must meet, is significant. And even more is it true that not in having sixty workers is there occasion for congratulation, but in the peculiar fitness



Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Merrell Vories.



of each to his or her special place in the work; and in the spirit of democracy and unity which binds this growing company in singleness of purpose to the super-national Kingdom of God thru Jesus Christ.



PART III.

"THE BIRDS COME AND LODGE  
IN ITS BRANCHES"



## PART III.

### “THE BIRDS COME AND LODGE IN ITS BRANCHES.”

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WE have seen, first, how under the strange providence of God there was started an unusual type of Mission in a neglected and unknown province of Japan, and second, we have traced the outstanding features of the development of that tiny beginning into a Mission large enough to be felt beyond the borders of its province. The mustard-seed has become a tree.

We come now to a third section in which we consider briefly some of the fundamental principles of mission work that have come to lodge in the branches of our mustard tree, as experience and observation have been teaching us.

The whole course of Omi Mission has

reiterated the lesson of our first years, that GOD'S plan is the only safe plan. Evading it for personal preference, we lead a futile life; acquiescing in it, we are led thru an ever widening venture of faith to issues beyond our human dreams.

We are convinced that there is no "strategic center," determined by man's wisdom or preference; but that the most remote interior, if it be the place God meant for our effort, offers ample field for the best we possess. According to human judgment, it was folly to begin our Architectural Company in an unknown country town with much competition in the Capital: yet God has given success beyond men's expectations. It was termed "burying oneself" for us to confine our Mission work to rural Omi: yet God has made of that tomb a city set on a hill.

The wisdom of open-mindedness, rather than a set program, thus making possible experimenting and adaptation to new and

changing conditions, has been a principle with us from the beginning, and it has become more a conviction with the years.

That mission policy and the use of resources should be determined on the field, and not in a Home Office thousands of miles away, seems as evident to us as that the commanding general should be near the front and not secluded in the Capital. The men of highest ability should be where the actual problems are to be met, and not at home in a business office. Omi Mission could never have developed a half what it has done if it had been financed and controlled in America. Mission Boards seem to be necessary as a means of general missionary enterprise; but we believe there is a place also for special work by independent missions controlled on the field.

We have found a basis for dealing with the vexed question of the relation of native and foreign workers in a mission. The most advanced standard that they of old

time seem to have evolved was "be careful to give *equal* recognition to the native worker"—a sort of "balance of power." To us it seems as if this very carefulness rather emphasizes than eliminates the problem. It has been the policy of Omi Mission from the beginning to *ignore* race lines inside the Kingdom of God. A man is chosen for any responsible post without regard to his race, but according to his fitness. Sometimes our Executive Committee—which determines all sorts of Mission questions, between the monthly sessions of the entire Mission—consists of equal numbers of Americans and Japanese; sometimes it has one American to four or five Japanese. If matters were voted on by race, rather than by principle or personal conviction, we should almost always have the American position voted down by the Japanese. But in all these years not one question has divided us racially—however keen argument has become over some measures.



An international quartette in Omi Mission  
Korea—America—Japan—China.  
(Mr. Kang—Mr. Bonta—Mr. S. Hara—Mr. Voo).



Our conviction as to the wisdom of ignoring race, rather than seeking "balance," led us to attempt our mite in the solution of the crisis in Korea the last few years. First by a representative of our Christian Japanese visiting Korea, and then by bringing young Koreans to join our Company, we are seeking to build up points of contact between fellow Christians, regardless of nation; so that a more sympathetic judgment may characterize both sides. We believe this method will succeed, and that it is the *only* method that will, in bringing reason and co-operation instead of prejudice and competition between peoples. We also believe that the time for Christians to put forth efforts toward such mutual understanding is when trouble is actually abroad, or brewing, rather than when everything has been "settled" by force or politics.

In general, we believe that our central objective should be to demonstrate here the

fact that loyalty to the vision of the Kingdom of God can overcome all obstacles of race, social systems, and personal prejudices, and make possible a community of brothers and sisters in Christ—which is the only *Church* that He is apt to recognize, since it was such unity that He prayed for, “in order that the World may believe.” We are persuaded that only thru such a demonstration will the masses of humanity be led to apprehend the Truth. Preaching about it will not suffice. The success of any Mission must be gauged ultimately by how far it has progressed toward such a unity *within* as to persuade those who are *without*.

In persuance of this principle, we undertook, several years ago, the so-called “impossible” organization of a Bible-Study Class for all classes, ages, and conditions. From a small beginning in my study, it spread out thru the living room and sometimes requires the combined living and

Omi Mission's International Sextette.

Sweden    Korea    Denmark    Japan    America    China  
(Larsen)    (Lym)    (Dortzbach)    (Takigawa)    (Waterhouse)    (Voo)





dining rooms with the hall between. In it are found representatives of labor and capital, nobility and "out-caste," professors and pupils, young men and old, and a few women. For six or seven years, the hour of Bible lesson was followed by an hour of social intercourse—quite an important feature, since it means social equality between all these "unmixables." It worked and worked well. Results were achieved in specific conversions, but more especially the atmosphere of Christian democracy was breathed. Last winter, by the simple expedient of changing the name to "Current Topics Class," it became possible to secure free discussion by *everyone*—another near-impossibility in an Oriental Bible class. And a final "impossibility" was achieved in having a thoro but bloodless discussion of the dangerous Korean situation by a Korean member of the class.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are often asked about our attitude

toward Mission Boards. The ideas we have come to hold in this respect are among the birds that nest in the Mustard Tree. Let us glance briefly at two or three questions involved.

- 1). "Why doesn't Omi Mission connect itself with some Mission Board"?

The answer is simply, *It would be impossible*. We may ask in return, *At what point in its development, should Omi Mission have joined a Mission Board?*—At that very point it must have ceased to expand. There wouldn't be any Omi Mission such as we know if the work had been under any existing Board in the past. No Board was ready or able to undertake this sort of work when it was begun. To undertake it, a Board would have to grant initiative and an unrestricted checking account to the original workers. No Board has resources enough to make such an arrangement with *all* its mission stations, and none dares show favoritism to one

special station. We believe no Mission Board *wants* to annex Omi Mission. We see no need of, or advantage in, such an annexation. There seems to be need of the Board way of Missions in most cases, under our existing social and economic conditions. We believe also He has use for the independent mission—so long as it does not make trouble by overlapping with the work of established missions of the Boards, or become merely the propagator of some one-sided prejudice or dogma, instead of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Perhaps the chief use of independent missions should be to conduct experiments in mission work by which the more conservative Boards may profit; the independent work being freer to try out new methods. If God can use both kinds, it scarcely devolves upon us to force either to become absorbed in the other.

- 2). “Aren’t you afraid your work will come to naught if you should die without a Board to perpetuate it”?

Answering this personal question personally, I should say that such a fear implies one of three doubts: Doubt of the abilities and consecration of my *associates* in the work, to whom most of its success is due; doubt of my own claim that it was God Who founded this work and Whose leadership alone has been able to bring difficult things to pass with only ordinary human instruments; or else doubt of GOD'S intelligence in permitting the death of a worker before his task is finished, or of His power to raise up whatever successive workers may be needed.

In none of these points do I personally have any doubts. Omi Mission has been from the beginning a venture of faith. When it becomes necessary to put our trust in Boards and Bank-accounts our Message to the people of Omi will be something different from what we are trying to convey at present. Would you have us become known to our com-



Rowe Rest House, for passersby, by the  
roadside at Omi Sanitarium.



munity as the Ambassadors of Such-and-Such a Board or as the Ambassadors of Christ?

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As to the financing of the ever-enlarging work, of course the Architectural department is often hard put to it. Needed and much-desired extension is held back by inadequate funds. We have plans under consideration for other productive activities to help with the growing budget. But over and above all our efforts there is, and seems likely always to be, room for the help of our friends abroad and among the Japanese. We not only welcome but find a peculiar encouragement in every voluntary contribution that comes from a fellow believer in the Kingdom of God, as an expression of his or her endorsement of our work, and co-operation in it.

But we do not solicit promiscuous funds or pass collection plates that may coax unwilling dollars into our treasury. We

do not believe that "one man's dollar is as good as another's." Our invitation to the readers of this little book is limited to those who share with us the principles which we seek to exemplify in our work. To all such we offer our invitation to write us directly at any time for further details about the Mission, or any of its departments, and we commend to you our little monthly,\* that you may follow with us the future developments of the Omi Mission.

\* \* \* \* \*

In conclusion, may I outline some of the visions of what the future demands of us, and some of the needs involved, to which we invite the sympathetic consideration of our friends? The birds in the Mustard-Tree sing to us a stimulating music of the yet unfinished task before us; a challenge to far greater things to be undertaken for our Lord and Master.

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\* *The Omi Mustard-Seed* is sent freely to all contributors to the Mission. Address: The Omi Mission, Omi-Hachiman, Japan.



Omi Mission Tennis Court.



Perhaps first among these comes the urgent need of doubling the capacity of *Omi Sanitarium*. The careful records of the superintendent indicate that if we had this added capacity the Sanitarium could become self-sustaining. That would be a great relief to the Mission, and set free needed funds for other departments. But even more pressing is the call of the waiting list, caused by lack of space. The increase should include some endowed beds for cases especially needy. A large percent of our patients the first two years were Christian workers. To conserve these forces, space and endowment are serious needs. Furthermore, a *Rest Cottage* is needed to take cases only threatened with tuberculosis or breakdown, in time to prevent the more serious conditions. This should serve Missionaries as well as Japanese. A central dining hall that can also serve as a *social* and *meeting* hall is one of the next things that should be added. A *surgical department*, with equip-

ment, must come before long. There ought to be a large truck-garden or farm added, to supply food both fresh and cheap. Besides these, there are three features in the way of extension that ought to be realized soon: a *nurses' training department*, to prepare nurses adequately trained for the modern care of tuberculosis, and to carry out our dream of *district nursing* service to our whole field; a *town dispensary* in Hachiman as a service to the community and a source of income for the Sanitarium; and a Convalescents' Camp, or Home, near the Sanitarium, in which those who are cured may find a half-way station on their return to normal work. Too many cases from economic pressure hasten too quickly into full-time positions which overtax their returning strength and lead to relapse. A properly-equip't plant should provide employment suited to the patients' ability, supervised by medical direction, where the double purpose of providing convalescents



Preaching from the deck of the *Galilee Maru*.



with a means of livelihood and of breaking them in gradually to suitable work could be realized. Gardening, poultry-raising, etc., could be made to pay by selling the produce to the Sanitarium kitchen. Some light indoor work might also be contrived for bad weather. The completion of the Sanitarium's attack upon its problem seems to call for these three further features.

A second vision that has not let us rest for several years is that of a *Training School* for Mission workers. We need a school that will produce men and women able to teach the Bible and to lead the people to *study* it for themselves. It should produce that most scarce and most needed kind of worker in Japan—*rural evangelists*, who from choice and ability select the vast unreached country population as the field of their life-work. The existing Theological Seminaries are in the cities and produce city workers and aspirants for city pulpits. This is necessary work, but there remains

the larger task of producing *somewhere* men who can handle the three-quarters of the population who dwell in the villages. Omi Mission has the will to undertake this work and the laboratory for such training in its own community. We have a good site purchased in faith some years ago. We still need funds for buildings and the salaries of a couple of special teachers, in addition to those in our own group already.

We see the chief task of a mission in Japan in these days to be *not* the general gathering in of so-called "converts," so much as the careful selection, enlisting and training of *workers*. It is not flocks to be led that are the crying need, but pioneers to lead in the un manned and under-manned churches and missions and yet untouched village communities. A place to give such men and women a suitable training is one of the chief needs of all Japan, and if Omi Mission can provide one such school, it will not only be a great benefit to



The "Omi Giants"—those of our workers who are taller than Merrell Vories—contrasted with one of the shorter men.



its own work, but also a real service to the whole Empire.

There is a still wider need, which later may come to the fore, in the way of educational work. The present educational system of Japan is one-sided. Its aims and methods are inadequate to a well-rounded development. Graduates of Government schools—and of the many Mission institutions under control, or “recognition,” of the Government educational authorities—are largely incapacitated for development into Christian leadership. Sometime there ought to be a complete system, beginning with a kindergarten and developing thru all stages to a modern Christian University as fast as graduates progress. Unless some Mission Board undertake such a project before long, it may become the task of an independent mission. This fundamental need cries out for adequate measures in the mute appeal of every boy and girl born in Japan and possessing potentialities of great

service to their communities and to the Kingdom of God, if only properly trained. It can be mentioned here only in passing, in the hope of appealing to someone with consecrated means.

A third need that calls upon us for adequate action is the pitiful community of so-called "out-castes," over against Hachiman—together with scores of other such villages in Omi. These people are the descendants of a long-abused class similar to the "untouchables" of India. Altho legally given recognition as human beings some decades ago, the prejudices of centuries remain, so that they are still excluded from social and economic equality, living apart in miserable villages of their own; for the most part unsanitary, unwashed, and underfed. Before these people can take their place as equals, a more suitable education must be provided. Mostly they perform menial labor or sweat-shop piece-work at home. Large families make their workers' wages



Town Auditorium at Ha himan where we sometimes hold Christian meetings, since the local attitude toward our work has changed.



of unskilled toil utterly inadequate to properly feed and clothe their children; much less to educate them. Many criminals originate in these special villages, and largely, we believe, thru stress of poverty and the limitations of ignorance. It has long been our aim to attempt a special work for these people. We feel sure that the only place to begin a thorough-going reform is with their children. A kindergarten would be the ideal opening, and it should be followed by a vocational school, where the older children could learn how to become economically independent.

One of the chief problems is the barrier of reticence and suspicion found in this class. A foreigner, or even an ordinary Japanese, coming amongst them with new ideas would find it almost impossible to get a hearing, much less a following. It has been our hope to enlist one from their own midst to lead in this department of the work,

and we now have hopes of securing such a young man.

The regeneration of this peculiarly needy community would be one of the most powerful influences in persuading the whole population that in Christ is the power they also need.

I have referred before to the beginnings of a center for evangelistic work in West Omi. The site in Imadzu awaits a model rural institutional Church. The friend, or friends, who provide for that feature will not only help a large segregated population of Omi, but will also give to Japan as a whole a much-needed model for country work; an example for many who are vainly trying to gain the rural regions with transplanted city equipment, that may go far toward solving Japan's chief missionary problem.

There is need for several other such equipments for other branch centers of our work. In fact the needs are so many and



The Double House at Omi Mission (latest of our residences).



of such varying proportions as to make any amount of assistance fit some want, and certainly to keep constantly before our consciousness the humbling realization that what has been accomplished thus far is exceedingly small as compared with what is left to be attempted ; that we have only just begun our work. We shall welcome your prayers and your help, to the end that we may not fail in the task thus set before us by our Lord.

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Once more the ship\* that brings me back to Japan is nearing the journey's end, and again there comes over me the sense of exaltation, of humility, and of the Divine Presence, with which I first approached my then unknown field of labor for the Kingdom. The years have meant far greater developments than I then dared hope, altho I was dreaming of just such a mission as God has evolved thru our weak instrumentality.

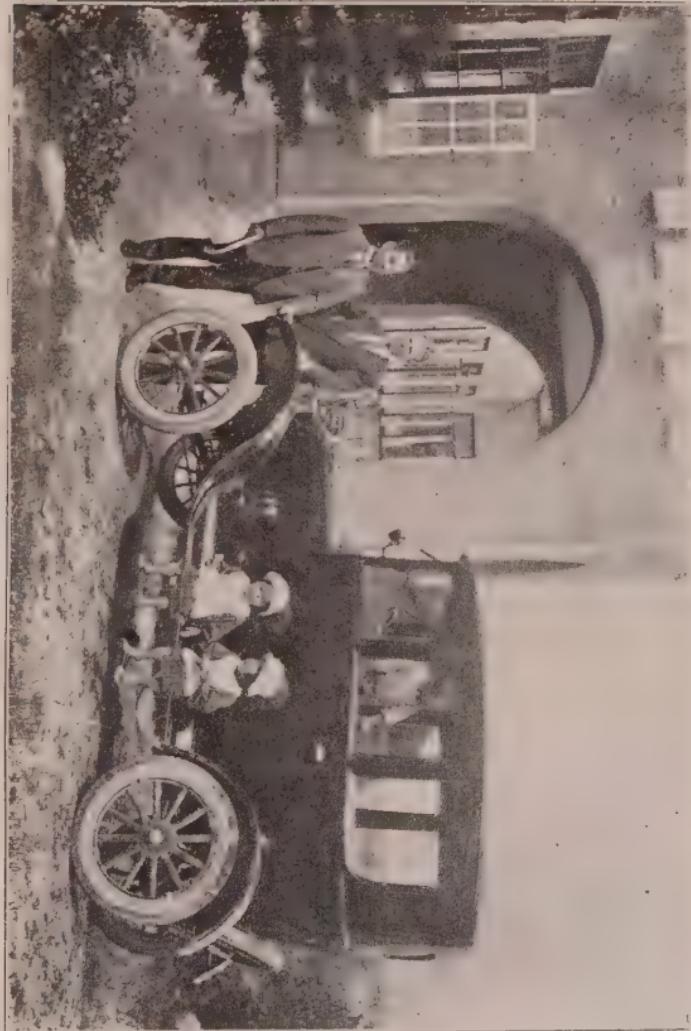
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\*Written on board the S. S. *Shinyo Maru*, after a brief tour in American.

Even on board the vessel I am reminded of the extent of that growth: a party traveling to the Orient has presented a letter of introduction from a mutual friend in America—a new friend from among last year's visitors to Omi Mission, who thinks it worth being seen by her friends visiting the important points of the East. And a missionary returning to Korea has with him blueprints for his mission's new buildings that were drawn in our office in Hachiman!

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I have tried to give you some idea of Omi Mission. But I wish you could come and see for yourselves, and feel the atmosphere. Perhaps I am over enthusiastic or over optimistic about it; but to me there is an atmosphere in it and about it that is like a brooding Presence. I cannot put into words what I feel about it; I cannot explain it. I only know that in little, unknown Hachiman town I myself touched once the Hem of the Christ's Garment and felt His



OMI MISSION AUTO—latest equipment for country touring. (Taken at the Sanitarium. Dr. Suwa, visiting specialist, Mr. Waterhouse, Gordon Waterhouse, and the Yoshida twins). This machine was made possible, in 1922, by a gift to Mr. Waterhouse from California Japanese, for whom he had done evangelistic work in 1920-21.



### Presence

"Nearer.....than breathing,

  Closer than hands or feet,"

—and it is wholly because of that experience  
that I have a message to share with others,  
and that I have confidence in the future of  
the Omi Mission.

Mistakes we have made—like mountain ranges; successes—like the tiny veins of gold that thread their way thru the dark mass. Omi Mission is an experiment. In location and in methods it has sought untried ways. It is not a finished work or organization. Still it is feeling its way toward a goal—which we believe GOD has set before it—invisible as yet, but real to those who have caught the vision. Out of the errors of our inexperience, we trust the Great Alchemist may bring somewhat of pure gold of the Kingdom. Or—to return to our first figure—we hope the Master Gardener may yet bring worthwhile fruitage from this little "mustard-seed."



## APPENDIX I.

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### PLATFORM OF OMI MISSION

- I. To preach the Gospel of Christ in the Province of Omi, Japan, without reference to denominations. There being no "Omi Mission Church," converts to be organized into self-supporting congregations of the denomination of their own choice.
  - II. To practise the complete unifying of the work and fellowship of Japanese and foreign workers.
  - III. To evangelize communities unoccupied by any Protestant Mission, and under no circumstances to overlap with the work of such Missions.
  - IV. To evangelize *Rural* communities, as the most conservative element of the nation, and the most probable source of leadership.
  - V. To seek, enlist, and train leaders and workers.
  - VI. To work for social reforms, including temperance, social purity, marriage customs, physical and sanitary betterment, and definite efforts for the poor and the "out-castes."
  - VII. To study and experiment with new methods of evangelization.
-

II

"WORKERS AND DEPARTMENTS OF WORK

**Architectural Department** (W. M. Vories & Company, Architects): Edwin Bonta, S. Hara, Y. Hara, K. Hayashi, E. Kakimoto, Y. Kang, S. Kasai, S. Katagiri, C. Kawase, M. Kojina, S. Kumamoto, D. O. Larsen, Lym Duk Soo, M. Miyagawa, K. Murata, H. Sato, M. Sato, S. Suga, K. G. Takigawa, S. Toyoda, W. M. Vories, E. V. Yoshida, T. S. Yoshimura.

**Correspondence and Newspaper Evangelism:** (With Circulating Library for inquirers.) T. P. Tominaga, E. V. Yoshida.

**"Galilee Maru"** (Gospel Cruiser on Lake Biwa)  
Captain Rev. Paul B. Waterhouse; Vice-Captain, S. Yamamoto; Evangelist, Rev. I. Takeda; Engineer M. Nishizawa; (Preaching in West Omi, across Lake Biwa.)

**General Evangelization:** K. Okada (Voluntary), Rev. U. Takahashi, Rev. I. Takeda, E. V. Yoshida (Various types of work, assisted by workers from other departments.)

**Hachiman Y.M.C.A.:** Rev. U. Takahashi (Secretary), Mr. & Mrs. G. Nishii (Housekeepers.)

**Industrial Department:** K. Hayashi, Y. Wakayama; **Omi Mission Office:** S. Nojima, T. P. Tominaga.

**Omi Sales Co., Ltd.:** Fred Dortsbach, K. Murata, I. Namikawa, Y. Sato, Y. Tsutsumi, John Vories, W. M. Vories, E. V. Yoshida. (Importing business which helps finance Omi Mission).

**Playground:** T. Yamada, Miss M. Tominaga, Mrs. Maki H. Vories, Mr. and Mrs. Larsen.

**Publications:** The "Omi Mustard-Seed," edited by Wm. Merrell Vories; The "Kohan-no-Koe" (in Japanese), edited by Rev. U. Takahashi; and The Omi Mission series of Tracts.

III

Railway Y.M.C.A.: Rev. I. Takeda, T. Yamada,  
M. Yoshida.

Sanitarium: Dr. T. G. Tominaga, Dr. N. Matsumoto, Y. Nishikawa (Clerk), K. Watanabe (Superintendent), Nurses: Misses Hirose, Mikami, and Yoshii, Cook: Mr. Takata; Helper: Mrs. Nishikawa; Farmer: Mr. Nagahara.

Scholarship Students: Messrs. N. Yoshikawa, K. Kamada, H. Maeda, and M. Takahashi.

Student Y.M.C.A.: I. Namikawa, T. Yamada, F. I. Lorbeer (Voluntary.)

Women's Work: Mrs. F. Dortzbach, Mrs. S. Hara, Mrs. D. O. Larsen, Miss F. Kato, Mrs. K. Murata, Miss M. Nishii, Mrs. M. Nishizawa, Mrs. I. Takeda, Miss M. Tominaga, Mrs. Maki Hitotsuyanagi Vories, Mother Vories, Mrs. Bessie P. Waterhouse, Mrs. E. V. Yoshida.

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## APPENDIX II.

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### SHCRT-TERM WORKERS

In so brief a narrative of the Omi Mission as this little book attempts, it is obviously impossible to even mention many incidents and features connected with the work. It is even impossible to include the names of all the friends, both in Japan and abroad, who by their time and efforts or by their gifts have contributed greatly to its success. But we wish within the covers of this volume to record a few of the names of those who have given the most conspicuous assistance.

In the early days, 1907 to 1910, when the writer was the sole American in Omi Province, there came in succession two young men who gave opportune service that meant much to the infant Mission: Mr. Thomas E. Hitch, an Englishman, who later went to Tibet as a missionary, and Mr. Walter C. Robb, of Minneapolis, who has been ever since his return thither our Representative in Minnesota and neighboring states. Our Mr. Waterhouse also spent a year in this period with us, before returning to America to complete his preparations for coming to Omi permanently. Rev. Frederick R. Thorne, of Dinuba, California, came out during his student days and gave a year's service at his own expense. His brother, Mr. George W. Thorne, also spent some months with us. We can never forget, either, two others whose help was of briefer duration but of incalculable importance, both of whom have since gone to their reward. Rev. John Teft Ward, D.D.,

formerly of Hillsdale College, Michigan, and Rev. R. P. Gorbold, D.D., formerly a Presbyterian missionary to Japan, each gave a month's time substituting for me in the Hachiman school when a critical illness required a sudden trip to America, and so, humanly speaking, saved the Omi Mission from an untimely end.

Two others during their residence in Kyoto exerted a strong influence upon the embryo Mission in its earliest days. The late Dr. J. D. Davis, co-founder with Dr. Neesima of the Doshisha, in many ways encouraged and helped us, and chiefly by *believing* in our visions and plans. He wrote shortly before his death, "I have been longing and praying these thirty years to see this rich province of Omi evangelized. It seems as if God has sent Mr. Vories there to use him in the accomplishment of this work." And Mr. G. S. Phelps, now senior secretary in Japan of the International Y.M.C.A., who was local secretary in Kyoto during the beginning days, was our chief confidant and counsellor.

We cannot forget, either, the fact that the foundations of the Hachiman church had been laid many years before our coming by the evangelistic efforts of a long line of Doshisha theological teachers and students; so that, altho the outward organization was almost lost, there remained as a nucleus a few staunch believers to begin to build upon; and there was the help of the Missionaries and Japanese pastors of the American Board and the *Kumiai* churches in Kyoto to be counted upon whenever called for.

Reinforcements in the Architectural department began with the three years of service by Mr. Lester G. Chaplin, of Brooklyn, from 1910-1913. His influence is still felt among us; he remains a

## VI

Representative, and both he and we look forward to his eventual return to Omi Mission. Next came Mr. J. H. Vogel, now of the Nission Architectural Bureau in Shanghai, who rendered valiant service for nearly five years, during the latter half of which term he was reinforced by his wife, also an architectural graduate.

Other short-term men have helped us for a time. Where the object was their own advantage they were soon forgot; but in such a case as that of Mr. Edwin Bonta, of Taylor & Bonta, Architects, Syracuse, N.Y., a permanent niche in the records of Omi Mission is fully deserved. Mr. Bonta came in 1920 on a two-year agreement, at great personal sacrifice, for the purpose of contributing his best to the Cause of Christ in Japan. His architectural work and his influence for consistent Christian living will remain as a definite element in our organization.

Mr. & Mrs. D. O. Larsen, of New York, are the latest recruits to our force. Mr. Larsen is an architect of considerable experience and Mrs. Larsen a graduate of Dr. White's Bible Teachers' Training School (now the Biblical Seminary in New York). Both are entering into the different phases of the work with ability and enthusiasm, and we all trust that their three-year contract will prove the preliminary stage of permanent membership in Omi Mission.

To the architectural department as well as to the Omi Sales Company, the prospect of an expert plumber is a hopeful one. After years of searching, we have engaged Mr. Fred Dortzbach, who comes with his wife and children from Akron, Ohio, to join us in the spring of 1922. Mr. and Mrs. Dortzbach have had experience in home-mission work, already, Mr. Dortzbach being a local-preacher in the Methodist church.

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